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THE

LIGHT OF NATURE

PURSUED,

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BY

ABRAHAM TUCKER, Esq.

F. C.

Second Edition,

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

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TOGETHER WITH

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

SIR H. P. ST. JOHN MILDMAY, BART. M. P.

VOL. VI.

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THE

LIGHT OF NATURE

PURSUED.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

CHAP. XV.

F A I T H.

DESCEND, celestial Graces, sacred Triad, stedfast Faith, all-soothing Hope, and serenity-smiling Charity. Your passage now lies easy, since when the gates lift up their heads, the everlasting doors of heaven were opened, and the King of Glory came down to succour lost mankind. He came in three distinguished characters: the Father awakening our slothful faculties, by signs and wonders; the Son opening a way to happiness, by setting a perfect pattern of endurance and forbearance; and the Holy Ghost invigorating our endeavours, by his imperceptible assistance, to copy the great example.

The almighty Agent, in this triple character, has rescued us from the thraldom of our

nature, evidenced by Adam's transgression; he has led captivity captive, and given gifts to men; he has subdued all our enemies under us: the last enemy subdued was Death, that king of terrors, whose grim aspect used to embitter all the joys of life. But now, O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of Death is sin; but you, angelic sisters, brightest among the the train of the King of Glory, when he passed the everlasting gates, choicest among the gifts he gave to men, shall shield us from the point of that sting.

You bear the panoply of God, proof against all assaults: for whomsoever you should fit therewith completely, he need not fear the approach of moral evil, nor pressure of what natural evil Providence shall judge needful for him to bear. It is by your enlivening energy alone, that we can become new creatures, that our affections can be raised from groveling in the mire of sordid appetite, our understandings enlightened to discern the things above, our hearts united in perfect harmony to pursue one common interest, as members of the same body, our views enlarged to [illegible]gard ourselves as citizens of the universe, [illegible] mortal made to put on immortality, and our clay-built tabernacles sublimed into fit tabernacles of the Holy Ghost, wherein

wherein we have promise that the Father and the Redeemer will come unto us, and make their abode with us.

Draw near, ethereal Virtues, shed your benign influence upon me, purge my mental eye, dispel the mists of prejudice and error; that I may behold distinctly your shapes and features, and faithfully describe them to such as will lend an attentive ear. Nor disdain to approach for that I have brought a train of earth-born goddesses to receive you, natives of philosophic land, daughters of human Reason: for he too claims his descent from Heaven, and bears the candle of the Lord, in testimony of his divine original. His fairest daughters these, the Virtues styled Cardinal, heretofore esteemed four, but in my searches by the light of nature appearing five. Is it presumption that I attempt to join heaven and earth in amicable concord? for both were works of one almighty Power, both correspondent parts of the same all-comprehensive plan.

Behold the celestial Graces condescend to take hands with those of mortal growth! Behold how aptly they associate in the mingled dance! how firmly Prudence treads upon the solid ground that Faith has marked! Prudence, whose features divided among the other sisters, make them all seem but her

under various forms; and Faith, on whose strong shoulders the two other Graces lean. Fortitude and Temperance follow most steadily, where led by sure and certain Hope. Justice never quits the train of unreserved Charity, and Benevolence is her very likeness, as much as mortal production can approach divine.

But first, thee, Faith, introductress of thy companions, thee first let me survey: thy strong-knit muscles, capable of removing mountains, thy hardy constitution, unhurt by toils and labours, unappalled by dangers, unvanquished by the fiery trial. In thy mirror thou exhibitest the perfect image of things invisible to mortal ken; with thy telescope thou bringest remotest objects near the eye. Thou evidence of things not seen, thou present sense of distant joys, and earnest of happiness kept in store for thy followers. Thou takest thy seat upon a rock; the solid ground of rational piety is the ground thou lovest to walk upon; honest Enquiry and sober Freedom are the pioneers to plane the way before thee; experience and contemplation of the Attributes the pavement whereon thou canst most securely tread.

The airy fabric of superstition and unthinking zeal will not support thy weight: there wanders there a phantom, aukward mimic

mimic of thy port and likeness, followed by a fallacious Hope and narrow-minded Charity: the hollow figure bears the semblance of thy vigour and robust complexion, but contains no nerves nor solid substance. She feeds on dreams and fairy tales, old legends, juggling tricks, and such fantastic food: she talks in an imperious tone and confident air, but fails in time of trial: she stands ever at variance with Reason, whose piercing eye and potent grasp are her greatest dread; so she hoodwinks her zealots, that they may never meet his glance, and terrifies them with menaces, that they may fly from his approach.

This the dim-sighted Free-thinker mistakes for thee, whom he charges with her absurdities and follies: so he draws his keen-edged weapon, ridicule, lays manfully about him, and thinks to make a merit with Reason, by an aid that does him no real service: for he is too eager of victory to distinguish friend from foe, or examine calmly what it is that he attacks.

But let us proceed with better care and circumspection, observe attentively thy countenance and make, the construction of thy frame, the texture of thy joints, and ground thou standest upon, that we may neither draw thee disfigured by any foreign mixtures,

nor

nor give them an undeserved credit by being introduced as parts of thy composition.

2. In the current notion of Faith, it is apprehended to be an assent of the mind to some proposition, or a conviction of its truth; which whoever admits is deemed to have the virtue of Faith, and whoever denies is condemned as an infidel. The zealots of all sorts understand it so, which makes them value themselves upon their orthodoxy, and think hardly of every one who does not admit the distinguishing tenets of their particular religion or sect. The Freethinker understands it so too, and therefore will not allow commendation due to any body for his opinions: nor could we find fault with his inference, if his premises were right. For against the merit of faith, in this idea of it there lies a very just objection, namely, that it is no virtue at all: for virtue must be an act of our own, the work of our own industry, and consequence of our volition; but assent is involuntary, it is an act of the understanding, not of the will, wherein the mind is purely passive, receiving such judgments as the objects exhibited cast upon her. For you cannot help seeing that two and two make four, nor can you assent to their making five by any power you possess; neither if you want

want clearness of thought to follow Euclid in all the process of a theorem, can you assent to the demonstration, how justly soever it be carried on.

Therefore if two heathens of equal capacity, but different ways of thinking, had the same arguments laid before them proving Jesus to be the Christ; should one stand convinced and the other not, the former might be the more fortunate, but not the more virtuous man upon that account. This I think can hardly be denied by anybody, supposing both to come with the same honest desire of learning the truth, to consider the evidences produced fairly and impartially; and to have no wilful prejudice or passion casting their weights into the scale. But this is not always the case: what then if our unconverted heathen failed of conviction, because he shut his eyes against the evidences proposed, so that they could not work their due effect upon his judgment, was he not blameable? Certainly, to a high degree; but his fault was of another kind than want of faith; it was want of sincerity, want of a proper regard to his reason and interests: for there are varieties of faults, and a man may be charged unjustly with one, though he were really guilty of another. There are some able and industrious workmen, a little too

too fond of liquor: if one of these intoxicates himself so as to become incapable of finishing the day's work he has to do, he deserves your censure for intemperance, but not for idleness; for no man can be counted idle because he omits to do what he was not capable of doing. So when a man shut his eyes against the truth, the blame lay in shutting his eyes, not in that he did not see when they were shut, for this it was impossible for him to do; and the fault was owing to a wrong turn of mind previous to the failure of conviction you complain of.

On the other hand, the commendation belonging to him that was convinced, was due to his behaviour preparatory to the conviction, while he was yet as much an infidel as his partner: therefore his honest attention, which is all you have to praise him for, could not be deemed an exercise of the virtue of faith, but of some other virtue. And I believe it may be safely laid down in general, that conviction of a truth unacknowledged before never is itself an act of virtue, though it may be the reward and fruits of some virtue the man had before conviction. Hence it appears the essence of faith does not consist in assent to certain truths proposed, nor in easiness of conviction, upon good and solid reasons: I grant that where good and solid

reasons

reasons will not move, it indicates something vicious in the character; but then it is a vice of another species than infidelity: wherefore we must seek elsewhere than in conviction for the proper bottom whereon to place the essence of faith.

3. We have taken notice upon several occasions, that man is not entirely a rational, but a sensitivo-rational animal, guided by understanding and imagination jointly; and in CHAP. XII. XIII. of the first volume, have endeavoured to ascertain the distinction between those two faculties. His motions for the most part are actuated, and his purposes executed by appetite, desire, moral sense, habit, persuasion, and all the family of imagination; the office of understanding lies only in recommending the purposes, and even in the choice of them it must proceed upon motives and principles suggested by the other faculty. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to have a well-disciplined imagination, habituated to run in the tracks that reason has pointed out: for reason is a slow mover, not quick enough to keep our active powers in play, nor vigorous enough to surmount any obstacle, until use and expertness have made the practice easy.

Hence it is that the dictates of reason have so little effect upon our conduct, unless some appetite

appetite or desire can be brought to co-operate with them; and the virtues do not receive their essence completely, until they are grown into appetites. Let a glutton be ever so well convinced of the desireableness of temperance, and resolve upon the practice, he will keep his resolution no longer than while he can hold the good consequences of temperance in contemplation, and behold them with more satisfaction than the present gratification of his vicious appetite: in which case it is not temperance he desires, but its benefits; for the ultimate point in view is always to be deemed our motive of action, not any intermediate steps discerned necessary to attain it. But all this while he has not the virtue of temperance, he has only what the ancients called the inchoation of virtue, wherein she is in her embryo state, not yet completely herself, nor fully formed. When by frequent contemplation of the consequences, satisfaction becomes transferred from the end to the means, so that desire can fasten upon acts of temperance immediately on being presented to the thought, then it is he begins to have the virtue of temperance.

For it is of the very essence of virtue, that she have force enough to draw us to the pursuit of her for her own sake: whatever other considerations first made her amiable, they must

must be dropped out of sight, before she can arrive at her full stature; for while they remain in view, the acts we perform may be interest, may be prudence, or piety, or acts of some other virtue, but not exercises of that particular virtue whereto they seem to belong.

But in all appetite or desire, of which every genuine well-formed virtue is a species, there is an assent or persuasion of the mind that the action suggested will prove satisfactory in the performance; and this persuasion rises instantly upon thought of the action, without thought of any thing further to recommend it: so that in every desire there is a persuasion, not always worked by reason, but discerned intuitively by sense and apprehension, and the strength and efficacy of the desire depends upon the degree of persuasion: which gave occasion for some to lay down, that happiness is made by opinion. But there are some assents, which though not immediately raising desire, yet are of necessary use to direct us where to place and how to attain it: for a competent stock of useful knowledge is as requisite to our well-being as a useful turn of inclination; but this knowledge, to be serviceable, must be so strongly imprinted in the imagination as to appear in its full colours upon inspection, otherwise it will

will rest in empty speculation, having no influence upon our conduct.

In CHAP. XIII. above referred to, I have distinguished between conviction and persuasion: the first is worked by arguments evincing a truth, and while we have those arguments ready in mind, we may satisfy ourselves of the truth at any time by contemplating them; but the recollecting them is a work of some time and reflection, nor can be performed always whenever we may want the truth for our direction. But by frequently holding the evidences in view, assent will at length become transferred from the premisses to the conclusion, as well as desire from the end to the means: from thenceforward conviction grows into persuasion and the truth becomes a judgment of the mind discerned by sense and apprehension, not a deduction of reason, and operates as a principle of action. Thus both assent and desire may, by care and diligence be brought to fix upon objects without the intervention of any thing else to connect them; and as when desire has been thus habituated to prompt to laudable actions without view of the profits recommending them, this constitutes the essence of a virtue; so when assent has been inured to rise spontaneously upon the idea

of

of certain useful and practical truths, though unaccompanied by the evidences enforcing them, this bears the same characteristic, and as well merits the title of a virtue as the other.

4. Persuasions of the imagination commonly accompany the convictions of understanding so long as the evidences working them can be retained in their full colours, but not always: for where there was any prior persuasion contrary to them, it will struggle a long while before it will give way to the strongest conviction. Hence comes the so usual expression, I could scarce believe my own eyes, when people see any thing discordant from their former ideas; and we often find a difficulty in persuading ourselves of a matter, after having seen convincing proofs that it must be true. We all now agree that the Sun stands still, and the Earth moves round him in her annual orbit; yet we cannot imagine the quiet bed we repose on to run hundreds of miles in a minute. Arguments have been produced to prove irrefragably that the compactest bodies upon earth contain more of pore than solid substance; yet our ordinary persuasions concerning wood, and stone, and glass, and other hard bodies, represent them to us as perfect solids; and the very epithet applied to the motion of light,

light, which we call an incredible velocity, shews that imagination cannot always follow the fullest conviction of reason.

But in many cases, those too of no small importance, although persuasion does accompany conviction while reason can hold up the necessary lights, it will not stay a moment after they are withdrawn. When retired to our closets we give full and fair scope to reflection, we can satisfy ourselves of many truths that would be of excellent service to us for directing our conduct; but when we enter into action, at which time their influence is most wanted, we find the persuasion of them gone; not perhaps that they are lost out of our memory, but appear there as speculative fancies, without any solid foundation, nor can we always recal them again in their full colours even in our hours of leisure.

How many people, thoroughly convinced of there being no reality in ghosts and apparitions, yet cannot lay aside their fears in the dark? but fear implies a persuasion of something mischievous really at hand. How many people carry away a persuasion from sermons or good books, which they cannot retain in vigour to the next day? Tully tells us that while he had Plato's Dialogues before him, he was always assuredly persuaded of the immortality of the soul; but when he laid

laid his book aside, doubts began to arise, and his persuasion dwindled away by degrees into nothing. We hear continually from the pulpit, that though there are few speculative atheists now in the world, there are multitudes of practical atheists; that is, persons who have not God in their thoughts, unless when you put them in mind, for then they will readily and sincerely acknowledge his Being, his Power, his Holiness, and his Justice. These people do not want arguments to convince their understanding: they want only to have their conviction take such strong hold on their imagination, as that the impulse of sensitive objects may not loosen nor perpetually drive it out of sight. And it is a common complaint that men do not live up to what they know: we all live up to our persuasions, but they do not always follow our knowledge. For our present judgments successively shape every turn in the windings of our conduct, but they continually fluctuate or vary in form and colour; nor can those which were the result of our clearest knowledge, maintain a steady seat in the mind, without being displaced or changed by others, thrown in mechanically, from external objects, former habits, example, or company.

Therefore faith is an habitual uninterrupted persuasion of truths that have been manifested

fested such to our understanding: as superstition may be defined a retaining persuasions after reason has plainly shewn them erroneous. Hence comes the distinction so frequently insisted on in Scripture between a dead and a lively faith: the former is but a nominal faith or theory, the latter alone a real one and a virtue. For when an important article is become a judgment of the mind, appearing there as a self evident truth, rising spontaneously, with a strong unreserved assent, without waiting for reflection to evince it; then, and not till then, it will operate as a practical principles of action, and have its weight in determining our minutest motions; but nothing that is not practical can be useful or a virtue, nor placed to the credit side of our account.

5. But though faith be generated by conviction, and then not so much by strength of the evidences contributing towards it, as by the reiterated contemplation of them in our thoughts, it is often produced by other causes. It is well known, the continual chimings of a sect or party among whom a man is constantly conversant, will insensibly draw him into their notions, without aid of any argument or application to his reason. For example and sympathy have a surprising effect upon the imagination, and evil communications

tions will inevitably corrupt good principles, as well as good manners. Education, too, authority and custom furnish us with many of our persuasions, which we take currently upon the credit of others, who have delivered them to us with confidence as certain truths.

Nor do mechanical causes prove insufficient to affect the state of our opinions; strong liquors will raise hopes and give a man a confidence in his powers, he never could have attained by sober reason: diseases, those especially of the bilious and phlegmatic kind, render us unable to entertain a thought of the best attested pleasurable truths. I do not know whether I shall be counted whimsical, but I cannot help owning, I find in myself that indigestion, east winds, or an air disposed to thunder, make a considerable alteration of colour in the articles of my creed; nor can I then behold some of the most important truths of Religion, nor grounds of trusting in the divine Providence, nor duties of humanity and benevolence, with the same vigour of assent as at other times, when the machine is in perfect order. For crudities in the juices will often quench the Spirit by chilling and stagnating the blood; and I have experienced more than once that a sip of Daffy's elixir in the morning rising has proved a powerful means of Grace, dispelling doubts and despondencies,

pondencies, restoring Faith to its former strength and brightness. Hence those weakly pious people who disturb themselves for that they cannot raise a fervent glow of faith whenever they please, may learn that this is impracticable, as depending upon causes not under their command: therefore the gloom arising therefrom being not imputable to them, they ought to rest contented with their situation, expecting a better opportunity to improve their faith at seasons when their bodily humours and all external circumstances shall be more favourable. They may laudably do what they can to help themselves, but for that purpose might better have recourse to their horse or their apothecary, than to their gospel-minister: for air, exercise, proper regimen of diet, and aperients may relieve them; but upon these occasions, pathetic lectures, long prayers, and incessant hymn-singings will be likely to prove quenchers than quickners of the Spirit, to stupify than enliven their faith.

But though these impediments last mentioned are temporary, and only suspend but do not destroy our habitual persuasions, our faith being not dead but asleep in the interval; yet I apprehend our natural temperament, education, and company, give a permanent turn to our opinions. From hence it follows, that our faith, as well as our other virtues,

virtues, are in a great measure given us without our own endeavours to co-operate in the acquisition, being wholly derived from sources turned upon us by Providence. Many people are made equitable and benevolent, industrious and temperate, by the examples and instructions laid before them: and many entertain just and sound notions upon the most important subjects inculcated into them by others, without ever having discovered the truth of them by their own observation.

Nevertheless these habits, both of desire and persuasion, are valuable possessions, however obtained: wherefore it behoves us to spread them among our neighbours as far as we are able, by rational conviction if we can, if we cannot, then by authority, by exhortation, by example, by sympathy, by the passions, or whatever other method shall be found most feasible: and to improve those we have ourselves from whatever sources our good fortune has thrown them upon us; adding to them such others as we find wanting in our character, by careful and assiduous exercises of our reason, and by the practice of forms, ceremonies, customs, and institutions suitable to the purpose. For imagination is a faculty we possess in common with the brutes, and like them must be disciplined with manage-

ment and artifice; which then is honest artifice, when directed by an honest design and to a laudable purpose.

But the grand strengthener of faith and every other virtue is a behaviour conformable thereto; for nothing like practice to rivet any principle of action in our minds. A man may improve his courage more by one campaign than by any lectures he can receive upon fortitude, and confirm himself in his Religion by some difficult obedience to its dictates better than by all the arguments or meditations in the world. For my part, I place little dependence upon my moral speculations, while remaining in speculation alone, how carefully soever I have endeavoured to connect them: but if something occurs in real life wherein I can exemplify them in my conduct, I find it gives them an additional weight in my judgment, though without one additional reason to those whereon I had founded them. Nor do the effects of practice terminate in the particular principle prompting thereto, but extend to all others connected therewith: it is this makes faith grow like a grain of mustard seed, and shoot out all its branches until it becomes a tree spreading over the whole character and conduct: and by this may be explained that text which says,

To

To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

6. We have seen that faith is an habitual persuasion, therefore persuasion is the genus whereof faith is the species: for it is obvious there are multitudes of persuasions which do not deserve that appellation. Not but that we often apply it in common discourse to any favorite persuasion, as when we say, that such an one has great faith in Ward's pill or James's powder, or Berkley's tar water, for curing all distempers; or in changes of the weather-glass, or squalings of peacocks for prognosticating the weather: but here the word is used figuratively, for nobody imagines these things to rank among the virtues. It remains then to enquire by what characteristic to distinguish this particular kind of persuasion we have been speaking of. Now to make a persuasion faith, I conceive it must be of some important proposition, it must relate to some matter of Religion, it must be strong, and it must have a rational foundation.

Let a man believe ever so firmly that all diseases proceed from swarms of imperceptible animals breeding within us, this, though grounded on ever so good reasons, is only a speculative opinion, it cannot be faith for want of importance; for it will make no difference

ference in his manner of treating diseases or regulating his own diet and regimen. If he believes constant exercise, or physic, every spring and fall, necessary, it may be of great importance to his health: yet these are not faith, because matters of common prudence not of Religion or duty.

If he believe the practice of religious and moral duties his truest interest, so far as to give a ready sincere assent whenever put in mind of it; but it lies so light upon his thoughts as never to occur spontaneously without being suggested by somebody else, or if it rises in such faint colours as to be eclipsed by every dazzle of worldly profit or sensual appetite; he may have a nominal, but has not a real or lively faith, which can be of any avail to him, or influence his actions: for it is the spontaniety and vividness of faith that give it life, activity, and efficacy, and constitute it a virtue. But habit contributes more to nourish up this vigour than argument: it is the office of reason to direct us what we are to believe, but when we know this, the business is not half done, for frequent contemplation, proper discipline, and other means of faith must give us that full and habitual persuasion wherein the virtue consists.

And experience sufficiently testifies what mighty

mighty force there is in an inveterate persuasion: the invincible constancy of the primitive Christians, the slavish drudgeries of the Papists, the tedious attendances and self-denials of the Methodists, the whimsical austerities of the Indian Foughars, shew to what incredible lengths a strongly impressed notion will carry men; and make us sensible of how vast importance it is, to turn this powerful engine of human nature into right and salutary courses. Therefore we may easily imagine that Faith, when grown to full maturity of strength, may remove mountains of vice and indolence, subdue the strongest appetites, undergo the most grievous labours, face the most formidable dangers, and pass unhurt through the severest fiery trials; nor can any thing else assist us effectually upon such difficult occasions.

For we may observe that all those instances of persuasion above specified were generated, except the first, and that perhaps was greatly aided, not by application to the understanding but imagination, not to the head but to the heart, by example, by custom, by censure, by applause, by positive assertion, by continual harpings upon the same string, by working upon the passions: and these engines might as effectually be employed to good purposes as perverted to bad ones, were

but

but men of parts as industrious in studying the sience of honest artifice, as of selfish craft and cunning. The chief use of popular discourses upon topics of Religion and morality I take to be, not so much to instruct, as to warm, to encourage, to inculcate persuasion: for a man may be taught what he ought to do with much less time and trouble, than what he has learned can be nourished up into a vigorous principle of action.

7. I have laid down as one ingredient in the essence of faith, that it ought to have a rational foundation, nevertheless, I do not apprehend it always necessary that foundation should be first laid in the reason of the party believing: for this would be impracticable, because the superstructure is often wanted for use, where there is not this ground in being whereon to rest. The necessary process of education shews, that you must begin with inculcating persuasions before there is any compass of reason affording an opening to build upon: and many grown persons, either through the narrowness of their capacity, or avocations of their profession, never can be fully instructed in the reasons whereon you support the truths it is highly requisite for them to be persuaded of. Therefore it is in vain to think of doing every thing by rational conviction, nor need one scruple to instil right

and

and wholesome persuasions by such other methods as appear likely to succeed.

Nevertheless, I would have as much use made of reason as it would yield, nor advise any man to raise persuasions in another whereof he does not see grounds himself to think they will prove salutary to the receiver, nor to omit making those grounds visible to his understanding, so far as it can bear. For we ought to consider ourselves as public persons, our various talents given us for the general service; and since some want strength and opportunity to reason for themselves, those who have the faculty clearest ought to employ it honestly and sedulously for the benefit of others in whom it falls deficient; so that no persuasions may prevail, which were not originally introduced by the rational conviction of somebody or other. And with respect to those persuasions we find already engrafted in ourselves, before we first arrived at a competent use of our reason, it will become us to examine them carefully thereby, and trace them down to their solid foundations, that so we may be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us: for this will enable us to make a more judicious application of them to our conduct, to settle the precedence among them where they seem to interfere, and prevent their

their running into extravagancies, headlong zeal, or righteousness overmuch.

Besides, we may sometimes find cause to eradicate such of them as stood upon hollow ground: for persuasions inculcated by education or infused by custom, having been transmitted through many hands, may receive a little change in every step of their passage; so that by the aggregate of these changes, it is possible that from solid and salutary they were at first, they may come in time to be trivial or pernicious: nor are there not some among them which were calculated upon the characters and circumstances of times, which being different now, though they might be highly expedient two hundred years ago, they may become useless encumbrances upon us at present.

But though I would exhort every man to build as much as he can upon reason, let it be remembered, when he does build for himself, it must be upon his own reason, for he cannot see with another's eyes: he may indeed, and often ought, to trust another for what he does not see himself, but then he may judge of the other's veracity, and probability of the truth recommended. It cannot be expected that every man should be a philosopher, a theologian, or a metaphysician:

sician: but if he cannot choose his doctrines for himself, he may choose his teachers, and observe something in their conduct and manner of proceeding that shall give him a little insight into their character. God has given him some share of discretion, and expects he should improve it to help himself therewith: not need he lie under anxiety for the event, for one of the most wholesome persuasions is that of a perfect trust in the dispensations of Providence. The size of his talent was of divine appointment, and God knows what portion of understanding was proper for him, and how to produce good out of his weakness: therefore let him use the best judgment he has, and if he fall into mistake, it will be a happy mistake, provided it be involuntary, and not owing to his own mismanagement, or negligence.

8. When I required that faith should have a foundation in reason, it might seem to follow that this foundation must lie upon the ground of truth: but this is not to be understood so strictly, as that a man may not in any minute instance connive at the reception of an article he does not believe himself. It will be urged that sound reason must always stand upon truth, and so indeed it does ultimately, but not always without the intervention of something else as a cushion between:

tween: schoolmen allow, and divines sometimes employ what they call arguments to the man, when they use such as they think will weigh with the hearer, although having no credit with themselves; but then the conclusion they would prove to him thereby, ought to be a real truth in their own judgment or they act dishonestly. In like manner if you would bring a man into a persuasion you judge in you own mind to be just and beneficial to him, you may lawfully put in ure other persuasions leading thereinto which you do not hold yourself, provided you cannot effect your honest purpose upon him by rational conviction; for in this case the end sanctifies the means. For we have seen in the course of these enquiries, that use and expedience is the proper end whereto all our proceedings are to be directed: both opinions and practices are best when they tend to generate a happy temper of mind, and make us industrious in promoting happiness as well in ourselves as in others. Therefore when we have settled what persuasions conduce most effectually to this desirable purpose, we may laudably enforce them by such methods as we find feasible, if those are not feasible which we would choose.

It cannot be denied an article of the utmost importance, that our thoughts and words

words and actions here, will affect our condition hereafter; and to ensure the belief of this it is vulgarly supposed that books are kept in heaven, wherein are exactly minuted down all the transactions that pass upon earth. Now let some refined speculatist be scandalized at the thought of angels writing with pen and ink in books, or the need of a formal trial and judgment, imagining the same purpose may be answered as well by an apt connection of causes with effects established at the beginning among the laws of nature, he will never be able to make his connection intelligible to the vulgar: therefore if he deprives them of their books and their after-reckoning, he will leave them no persuasion at all to hinder them from indulging their own follies and vices, without fear of any damage to ensue therefrom.

Another very material article of faith is the government of Providence over all sublunary affairs, as well moral as natural, ordinarily imagined to be administered by perpetual interpositions among the motions of matter, instinct of animals, and actions of men, made either by immediate exertions of Omnipotence, or operation of invisible spirits peculiarly commissioned thereto. But if any man, wiser than ordinary, shall fancy it contrary to reason that superior orders of being should be

be employed in our little concerns, or that the wheels of Providence should be so unskilfully put together as to need continual rectifying every day by the hand of the artist, yet why should he disturb mankind in their conceptions, without which they cannot comprehend how the errors of chance and mischiefs of human perverseness, can be prevented, or any government of the world carried on?

The divine residence somewhere above the clouds, the far-stretching eye of Providence piercing through the thickest walls, and roofs, and coverings, into the secret chambers of darkness, the peculiar presence of God in places set apart to his worship, and that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them, may be thought matters of scoffing by some who cannot believe the Deity local, nor that he has any remote objects to behold, any coverings to pierce through, as being omnipresent, alike existent, intelligent, and observant, in every minutest portion of infinite space; nevertheless, it will be prudent to keep their scoffings to themselves, lest if they overthrow the popular notions, they may overthrow therewith all sense of the Divine Majesty, all expedience of being circumspect in their most private thoughts and actions, and that reverence in their devotions which may beget an habitual

habitual disposition of mind, tending to regulate their behaviour in the world.

In these cases it is not worth while to contend with an adversary for the truth, or the tenets currently received; for supposing them errors, yet when an innocent error lies so closely connected in the minds of men with an important truth, as that both must stand or fall together, it is against the interest of truth to eradicate it; for as in pursuit of pleasure, so of truth, the greater income upon the whole is to be regarded. Therefore your men of pleasure, as they affect to call themselves, very ill deserve the title; for they grasp at every present indulgence greedily, but thereby bring on more grievous displeasures afterwards: in like manner, your indiscreet sticklers for truth prove in reality its greatest enemies; they take vast pains to cure some little harmless mistake, and by so doing often lead into other fatal mistakes they were not aware of.

It is fixing the eye upon opinions singly, without reference to their connections and consequences, that misleads both the bigot and freethinker: the latter finds something he thinks will not bear a scrutiny, as having no ground of reason to grow upon, so he sets all his wits to work to pull it up by the roots, without minding what other useful plants are inter-

intermatted therewith, which of course will follow upon plucking this away: the other pitching upon some favourite tenet without ever examining whether it be directly serviceable of itself or only by its necessary relation to other serviceable persuasions, lays out his whole attention upon that, and pursues it to an extravagance incompatible with the very relation which alone made it recommendable. Whereas, if we would give all our opinions and all our duties their due share of our regard, we might find them in time consolidate into one regular system, wherein there would be no breaks nor inconsistencies, nor detached parcels, but they would model one another into shape and symmetry; and by discerning their several uses and mutual dependencies, we should understand them more perfectly, apply them more judiciously to our practice, and know better how to deal with other persons, according to their respective needs and dispositions.

9. Hence it appears very material for him that would build a rational system of faith, compact and solid in all its parts, to observe what persuasions are immediately serviceable in themselves, and from thence to consider, what others are necessary or expedient to protect and nourish the former.

Persuasions are serviceable, either when they

they tend to satisfy the mind with respect to our situation among things external, and to the rectitude and success of our actions; or when they direct to measures which will yield good fruits of happiness at some future time. The mind may be satisfied, and the will prompted to useful measures, by fallacious persuasions, which will operate as effectually as the best grounded until the fallacy is discovered: a man receiving a bag of counters, may be as well pleased therewith as if they were real gold, nor does his satisfaction abate until he finds upon trial they will not pass current in the market; and if he have extraordinary talents, he may employ them indefatigably in public services, while he can persuade himself there is an unparalleled happiness in having his fame continue many years after his decease.

Perhaps it might be found upon examination, that much of our pleasure and self-confidence arises, and much of the business of life is carried on, by means of fallacious persuasions, or if they be just, they are so by chance, being not chosen upon discernment of their proper grounds, but taken up from custom and fashion, fallen into by habit, or generated by vanity, prejudice, and self-love. This consideration makes little for the credit of human nature, governed in great mea-

sure by a kind of instinct, like the brutes, led thereby to provide against wants they have no knowledge of; but it may serve to heighten our idea of Providence, which can execute the purposes of wisdom by our follies, ignorance, and errors, and draw us to work out a real good we think nothing of, by pursuing a fantastic good that is such only in appearance and imagination.

Nevertheless, though Providence knows how to bring good out of evil, we do not: therefore it is our duty to take such measures of which there is a reasonable prospect to our own judgment, that they will bear valuable fruits. Fallacious persuasions may and do often satisfy the mind for the present, but as often disturb it, and at best must some time or other end in disappointment; and if they prompt to useful performances, it is always with a mixture of inconvenience, which might have been avoided had the same been undertaken upon good and solid motives. Wherefore it behoves us to form our opinions by the best exercises of our reason, upon such materials as we find afforded us from our own experience or elsewhere, to examine which of them will yield the greatest profit, and sedulously to cultivate those until they become habitual persuasions, rising in their full strength and colour whenever suggested to

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the thought, and to spread them as extensively as we can among mankind.

10. To enumerate all the variety of persuasions which can sooth for the present or uge to some profitable action, would be endless and impracticable; but they may be ranged under a few general heads, of which those tending to immediate satisfaction of mind are three: when we have a good opinion of our condition, which generates Content; when we have a prospect that things will happen well with us by-and-by, which is Hope; and when we confide in the rectitude of the conduct we are pursuing, which makes Self-approbation. Persuasions of the useful kind are of two sorts: those which give us full assurance that distant enjoyments will be present, and as delightful as those in hand, or that every right action will be attended with some desirable success, which give life and vigour to the virtue of Prudence, and those which make us regard the good of others as our own, whereon depends the virtue of Benevolence.

Health, vigorous desires, and plenty of materials to gratify them, give men a good opinion of their condition, which is usually heightened by comparison: for they please themselves more for possessing what others want, than for the intrinsic value of what they

possess; and to make the claim of peculiar advantage the more general, they severally undervalue and despise whatever does not suit with their own taste, regarding the rest of mankind, who follow different pursuits, as unhappy deluded creatures, but themselves as the prime favourites of fortune. Nor were the Stoics wholly mistaken when they placed happiness in opinion, for much of our satisfaction springs from that source.

Perhaps the only advantage of riches, honours, power, bodily strength, beauty, learning, quickness of parts, may lie in their being generally reputed advantages: for those who want them, and have been habituated to live without them, have their other enjoyments as copiously as those who abound in them, with this only difference, that the latter possess what they esteem an advantage, and this opinion is all that can give it any pretence to be a real one. When the mind is satisfied with her situation, she seldom forebodes mischief for the future; but our views are generally very short, and the future we concern ourselves with extends not to such a length as that we cannot easily flatter ourselves that our present supplies of enjoyment will hold out. Having this scanty prospect before us, we place rectitude of action in making provision for the gratifications lying within its compass:

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our vanity and self-confidence confirms us in the propriety of our conduct, and we are angry at every one who should presume to censure or question us upon it. Thus in this land of peace and plenty, we have most of us the three persuasions requisite for present satisfaction: unless when some cross accident, or turbulent passion, or imaginary want comes athwart the way to disturb our repose.

It may be thought trifling, that among the sentiments worthy our endeavour to inculcate, I recommend the persuasion of distant enjoyments becoming present, and being as much enjoyments, when they come, as those we have now in hand: for who ever doubts of this? or hesitates a moment to acknowledge, that to-morrow in some hours will be to-day, and that a diversion we shall partake of to-morrow, may prove as entertaining as one we are this instant engaged in? I know very well we are all sufficiently convinced, that the most distant futurity will one day become present, and when present, whatever satisfaction or uneasiness it brings, will affect us as strongly as those we now feel; but it must be remembered that we are speaking of persuasions, not of convictions, and the difference between the two is nowhere more remarkable, than upon the article of futurity. While we can hold up the lights of our understanding,

ing, we see clearly that remote good is alike valuable with the present: but it is the hardest thing in the world to fix an apprehension of this truth in lively colours upon our imagination.

The judgments of the mind correspond in strength and colour with that of the objects whereon they are passed; but the further objects are removed, they grow more faint and indistinct, and of course our opinions concerning them will be less vivid and clear. Both pleasures and pains at a distance appear scarce worth our regarding, or giving ourselves any trouble about them: let a man make trial, and he will find it impracticable, with all his efforts, to raise an apprehension of the desirableness of an enjoyment to come seven years hence, equal with one near at hand. For the present occupies our thoughts, and forcibly carries away the preference in our imagination from the future, against the clearest and surest decisions of our understanding. This imperfection of our nature deserves our utmost application to rectify, by gradually inuring the mental eye to discern objects distinctly at a distance; and it is the quickness of this moral sense, or habitual full persuasion of certain good and evil, however remote, being alike valuable with the present, that constitutes the virtue of Prudence.

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But the glass of passion will give a lively tint and magnitude to distant objects, when the eye of reason cannot: ambition, avarice, authority, example, and custom, set a value upon acquisitions that take up a whole life in the making; and vanity persuades us it is a desirable thing to have our names well spoken of a hundred years after we are dead and gone. These sources then furnish us in some measure with useful persuasions to carry on the business of life, and spur us up to as much industry in providing for the future as we do exert, serving as succedaneums to supply the place of that prudence wherein we fall deficient. And the like springs derived from education, custom, fashion, and fear of censure, move us to the exercises of benevolence, instead of the mutual connection of interests between man and man, which is its most solid bottom; but of which we seldom have an intimate persuasion, though we sometimes make profession of it in our mouths, and perhaps sincerely, as fancying that we have it, when in reality we have nothing more than the shame of being without it.

11. But these sources of satisfactory and useful persuasions spoken of in the last section do not flow upon all; nor are secure of being continued to any, as depending upon external and accidental causes: health, success,

cess, the materials of gratification may be taken from us, or when not utterly lost, are often withholden for a time; the solace found in comparison will be frequently wrested out of our hands, notwithstanding our utmost partiality, upon seeing others possessed of advantages we cannot but acknowledge superior to our own; disappointment, danger, and distress, will destroy our sanguine expectations of the future, and the mischiefs we run ourselves into by inconsiderateness, will discover a faultiness in our conduct, that with all our self-conceit we cannot varnish over. Passion, custom, fear of censure, prove but ill succedaneums to prudence and benevolence, doing their work imperfectly and injudiciously when set right, and often taking a wrong bias, urge us to act imprudently and selfishly.

Therefore these transient persuasions, springing from short views and narrow prospects, afford a very precarious benefit: to make them certainly and durably serviceable, they ought to be gathered from the most enlarged compass whereto the eye of understanding can stretch, so as to discern objects with an affecting clearness. Whoever is fully persuaded that the lot of his existence, so far as lies distinctly within his ken, contains a much greater proportion of enjoyment than uneasiness,

siness, must in general be content with his present condition, and augurate well for the future; and in seasons of trouble, his hope, if lively, will hold content from flying away; casting a gleam upon the darkness overwhelming him, from the many bright spots in prospect before him. An entire confidence in the efficacy of reason to procure happiness, in opposition to the inferior faculties, will give it an influence upon the actions, and raise a constant self-approbation in all that is done in pursuance of its dictates, even though they should sometimes lead into involuntary mistakes. The habit of seeking satisfaction in the prospects before him, and of confiding in the usefulness of his understanding, will create a sensibility and desire of distant good sufficient to carry him through all prudential measures; and the opinion that whatever good he does to others redounds sooner or later to his own advantage, will continually nourish in him a disposition to universal benevolence.

But though such persuasions may be received upon credit or catched by sympathy from others, they must have been first embraced upon some intrinsic recommendation of their own; which must come from their agreeableness either to our inclination or our reason. There is a wonderful propensity in mankind to believe whatever they wish to be

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true, and this may incline them to think well of their present situation, of the prospects before them, and of the justifiableness of their actions, without other ground than because the opinion is soothing to their thoughts. And it is so visibly the interest of every man to have other persons kindly disposed towards him, that we all join in crying up benevolence until we persuade ourselves it is a real good to the party possessing it, without clearly discerning the way by which it operates to his benefit.

But those persuasions, cast upon us as it were mechanically, by inclination or custom, are liable to be wrested from us by pain, vexation, or distemperature of the bodily humours throwing a melancholy gloom upon the mind, or by the company of persons of contrary sentiments: nor can be depended upon as secure and durable, unless fortified by other persuasions, built upon calm and solid reason, whereof inclination, prejudice, and interest had no share in the superstructure. Which persuasions must be drawn from Religion, because nothing else can afford a compass of ground large enough for the foundation that will be wanted; and what are so drawn I apprehend may properly be denominated Articles of Faith.

12. It cannot be denied that there are arti-

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cles of natural as well as revealed Religion, nor that if they could be compleatly drawn out and heartily embraced, they will produce a happy and useful temper of mind, answering all the purposes we could wish for from them. For I suppose if Adam had continued stedfast in his innocence, he would have wanted no knowledge of whatever made for his good; nor yet would he have known any thing of those promises, which were given for restoration of his lapsed race. But in the present darkened state of his descendants, we have no certain rule whereby to settle and distinguish the necessary articles: every one is left to his own judgment, and those who have exercised it most carefully, have varied greatly from one another in their determinations. In this uncertain situation of things, I may be excused in offering my sentiments, taken, as may be expected, from the foregoing parts of this work: which I shall not attempt to impose as dictates of authority, but suggest only to the consideration of each person who may think it worth while, either to receive or amend them, according as shall be found most reasonable and convenient for his use.

The corner-stone of Faith must be laid in the belief of one God, and the attributes of Omnipotence, Omniscience, infinite Wisdom, Goodness,

Goodness, and Equity: upon this bottom, well grounded, will stand firmly the dominion of Providence, by the appointment or permission whereof all events come to pass without exception throughout the universe, ordering all things for the best; but then by this best must be understood, not what appears so to our desires or judgment, but what is best in the eye of unerring Wisdom for the creation in general. But since many dispensations of Providence tend to the detriment of human life, we can have no interest in the good fruits of them, if our existence terminates with our life: therefore the next point to be inculcated is the unperishableness of our nature; that we shall for ever retain the capacity of enjoyment and suffering, and that our sensibility will be at least as great when separted from the body, as in it.

Having fixed this article upon our minds, it will be necessary to impress the persuasion of distant enjoyments, whereof we have an assured expectation, being as valuable as those near at hand: and upon this article there needs no argument to convince us, that a thousand years hence will in due time be present, as surely as the next hour; the difficulty lies in turning this conviction into a strong and lively apprehension, equally vivid with that worked by the evidence of the

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senses; without which all our other persuasions will avail little either to satisfy the mind, or to carry us on in the prosecution of our most important interests. If we could compleatly attain such quick sensibility of the future, we should never want a counterpoise to balance the weight of any present evil that might befal us: for we should always have an exhilarating prospect in view, being assured, from the divine dominion and goodness, that there must be abundantly more good than evil in nature; and since goodness cannot terminate its views upon evil, therefore the very evils we lie under must be sent for some greater good to redound therefrom to the creation. But the divine Equity, inferring an equality of enjoyment and burden among the creatures, ensures to us our share of the profit arising from every trouble, and of all the good befalling everywhere.

It is this connects the universe into one society of coparceners: brings the interest of others home to ourselves; overthrows all pretence to privilege and pre-eminence, renders it indifferent to whose profit we apply our endeavours, whether to our own or our fellow-creatures, provided we turn them where they may yield the greatest advantage; and makes us desirous and delighted to see happiness wherever it can be found, as giving us a better

a better opinion of the lot of existence whereof we partake. But though the lot of existence be equal upon the whole balance of some immense period, too long for us to measure by the line of our comprehension, yet the several stages of it are unequal: this we know by undoubted experience to be the case of human life, nor does there want reason to expect much greater inequalities, and of far longer duration, in the stage of being we have next to pass through; wherein it appears, upon contemplation of the divine Justice, that our condition will depend upon our behaviour here, this life being preparatory to the next.

The consideration that all creatures and all forms of being lie under the dominion of one Governor, may convince us, that the several laws respecting them were formed upon one all-comprehensive plan: therefore the municipal laws in each district were calculated for the good of the whole, and by promoting the advantage of our fellow travellers in the stage wherein we are placed, we shall take the surest method of procuring advantage to every other stage we have yet to pass through. So that though the happiness of the next life be the principal and ultimate aim of our pursuit, yet the general good of mankind in this world, and of ourselves as members of

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the species, is our immediate aim and proper direction to attain the other: this then we ought constantly to pursue by such rules of Religion, morality, and prudence, contributing thereto, as we find established upon the best foundations.

Our understanding being the faculty that God has given us for the guidance of our conduct, we may rest satisfied that he has proportioned his gift to the purposes he intended should be served by it: therefore we may confide in the directions of this guide, being assured that, while we follow them, we pursue our own truest advantage. For though our guide will sometimes lead us into errors and inconveniencies, yet sooner or later we shall find it was better upon the whole that we have taken his admonitions, than if we had acted contrary to them: and this persuasion will give us a serenity and self-approbation in the rectitude of our measures, whether successful or not, whenever conscious of having taken them upon the best of our honest judgment, in preference to the solicitations of appetite, or passion, or interest, or other motive whatsoever. If our abilities to do service be small, or our opportunities scarce, if we find our reason at any time dark and uncertain, or that we cannot rise to those heights of virtue we wish and endeavour;

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this need not disturb us: for God distributes his gifts to every man in wisdom and goodness, and though understanding and virtue be among the choicest of his gifts, wherefore we ought to improve them to the utmost, yet still they are gifts; which should make us satisfied with the portion allotted us, without repining at what is denied: for we have always some choice in our actions, and strength to perform something of what we discern; if we can do nothing else, we may solace ourselves with the reflection of having made some use of the glimpses of light and pittance of vigour afforded us, which will encourage us to make a farther use of them, as often as occasion shall offer.

13. These articles of faith strongly riveted in the mind, so as to become habitual prevailing persuasions, must I conceive, nourish and strengthen those satisfactory and useful sentiments spoken of in § 11, whereon depend content, hope, self-approbation, prudence, and benevolence; which in a close-thinking person, can hardly stand secure and stable without them. For to such an one, the bare sanction of authority or general reception will not always suffice; the notion of opinions and practices good in themselves without reference to use, will often prove a hollow foundation, nor can such reference be

be carried along upon solid ground without just and rational ideas of the supreme Being; from whose character alone we can gather any thing with assurance concerning things unseen, or the relation our present state and transactions bear thereto. Therefore they appear to me fundamentals of natural Religion: but as the pious and judicious Chillingworth has observed, fundamentals are not universal; the same tenets being such to one man which are not so to another, according to their respective apprehension of things, and model of their understanding.

Therefore if any man finds another theory of universal Nature, its laws and relations, different in any particulars from that above sketched out, more satisfactory to his reason, more effectually to ensure him a steady peace of mind in all situations, to carry him through any difficulty, danger, or self-denial, in pursuit of a greater remote good, and enable him to forego any present pleasure or private advantage for the certain profit of the public; let him regard it in the list of fundamentals to him: only let him not rest in the conviction of his understanding, but by frequent meditation and other methods he shall judge expedient, work it into an habitual sentiment that may rise spontaneously upon occasion, and make his theory practical, so

as to have an influence upon his ordinary thoughts and motives.

14. But there is no good thing which has not its imperfections and its opposite evils, which are as pernicious as the good are salutary, and therefore ought industriously to be guarded against. I have laid down that a persuasion, to be faith, must be right, and it must be strong; it is not right when it leads to sentiments contrary to those before specified as satisfactory and useful, and then may be called a heresy, or anti-fundamental; and I think it is the truest test of heresy to examine whether it must naturally tend to make us dissatisfied with ourselves, careless of our real interest, and regardless of one another. If we could settle the list of fundamentals, whatever opinion opposite thereto catches strong hold on the judgment, so as to be regarded as a certain truth, must be counted heretical: but thought it may be difficult to ascertain every thing precisely that is so, yet in some particulars one can hardly be mistaken.

When we entertain narrow notions of Nature or of the Deity, ascribing an original power to Chance and Necessity, or imagining God partial, vindictive, arbitrary, having an interest to serve upon us for the advancement of his glory, straitened in his good purposes

purposes by an uncontrolable nature of things, or scattering his blessings sparingly to a few only out of innumerable multitudes: this will unavoidably fill us with fears and suspicions of mischief to come, doubts and distrusts concerning the rectitude of our measures.

The doctrine we are too commonly bred up in and find generally established among mankind, that happiness lies in the indulgence of present desires, confines our views to the ground just before us, and effectually destroys that faith in the desirableness of remote advantages, which is the vital blood and sinews of prudence. You shall hear people value themselves upon their voluptuousness, their idleness, their exquisite taste of pleasures, their aversion to labour and self-denial of every kind; and what was originally an appetite shared in common with the brutes, becomes a deliberate choice of the judgment, a settled scheme of conduct, a ruling principle of action.

Nor does vanity fail of producing many heretical sentiments: children are brought up from their infancy in a high conceit of themselves, their condition and endowments; they despise every thing around them as trivial, sordid, and wretched; they think merit and the title to happiness peculiarly their own.

This must give them an unfavourable idea of nature, wherein they can see so very little worth the having: if things happen cross with them, they murmur against Providence, of whose goodness they can form no conception unless in an uninterrupted partiality to themselves; and begin to fear the world is not administered justly, because things unpleasing are permitted to fall upon such precious creatures. They are incapable of a sentiment of benevolence, as deeming none worthy regard except their own sweet persons, and some few favorites ministering to their pleasures, or resembling themselves. Their habit of drawing every thing to their own centre makes them look upon all labour as lost that is laid out in the service of another, as hearty good-will cannot well subsist with contempt, they can bear none to mankind in general, whom they utterly despise, as having nothing suitable to their own taste and customs: the dirty peasant is below their notice, because he has not the dress and breeding of a gentleman; the Chinese and Tartar is not worth a thought of what becomes of them, because they know none of the English modes; the Negro may be treated like a beast, because he is black and blubber-lipped; and the beasts may be abused, mangled, and tortured, for convenience, pleasure,

sure, or fancy, with as little scruple as we saw the trees into boards, because they cannot expostulate with us, nor retaliate.

15. The imperfection of faith is not owing to its erroneousness, but its faintness: many people have their understandings set rightly enough, and assent to the most important truths sincerely, without hesitation; but their assent is like the sight of objects through a mist, and leaves a secret suspicion and mistrust that perhaps they may not be true, though without any apparent reason to doubt of their truth. This, as we have observed before, is only a dead or nominal, not a real or lively faith; and is so far from removing mountains, that it cannot remove a mole-hill, nor overcome the slightest obstacle of appetite, terror, or indolence.

Several causes contribute to prevent persuasions from growing to their full strength: our hastiness to take them up on trust in veneration of authority or compliance with custom, before we have well digested them, or examined the weight of the authority, or sources of the custom, or endeavoured to support them by foundations from our own fund. The fallibility of human reason, which makes us loth to hazard any thing upon its clearest decisions, unless confirmed by actual experience; the necessary attendance to the com-

mon business of life, and expedience of taking care first of the concerns nearest at hand, which perpetually draw off our thoughts from remote objects and extensive scenes.

Besides this, our articles sometimes seem to clash: the due regard to our own interests obliges us to cross, to disappoint, to contend with other persons, even to punish and put them to hard service, and to forbear some things tending to the public weal: wherein Prudence appears to stand at variance with Benevolence. The absolute dominion of Providence, ordering all things for the best, may seem to supersede the use of our own deliberation and industry; the ultimate equality of all may give us an apprehension that our success upon the whole will be the same, whether we behave well or ill: as on the other hand, the constant experience in this world, and rational expectations of the next, that the conditions of men depend upon their own management, may tend in our judgment to overthrow the doctrines of Providence and Equality.

While our opinions thus interfere, they must necessarily weaken and discredit one another; keep us wavering between two, uncertain whether of them to prefer; in which case some appetite or secret inclination generally steps in to cast the balance, and the suspicion of

of this makes us perpetually mistrustful of our conduct. Wherefore, to obviate such inconveniencies, it will be expedient frequently to compare our sentiments together, to work them into one regular body, having no discordance among the parts, but rather mutually depending upon each other. For which purpose it may be helpful to recollect what has been offered respectively upon those seemingly clashing tenets in the former parts of this work; wherein endeavours have been used to reconcile them in perfect harmony together; to shew that they tend jointly to one end, the advancement of happiness, and stand upon one bottom, experience of human and external nature, together with the observations and reasonings clearly flowing therefrom.

16. But these reasonings proceed by steps from one discovery to another, and the justness of each subsequent deduction depends upon that of the preceding: hence it happens that there are always some intermediate speculative opinions, which, though yielding no direct profit themselves, yet serve to support and corroborate our fundamentals. For upon contemplation of them, our articles of faith will become convictions of reason; but conviction is the best and surest basis whereon to erect persuasion, and by being frequently run

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over in the thoughts, will establish it most strongly. Such of these speculative opinions then as are the premises necessary to work conviction of an article, we may style secondary or relative fundamentals, as having a near connection with the essential; and deserve to be well examined first, and then thoroughly fixed in the mind, that they may occur readily upon occasion, without doubt or distrust of their truth.

I have been careful all along in the course of these enquiries, to seek for what might redound to good profit; and how much soever I may be thought to have dealt in curious speculations, am not conscious of having pursued any that appeared mere empty curiosities, or improper for remote foundations whereon to build useful and salutary doctrines. Among these secondary fundamentals I reckon the individuality of the human mind or person; the faculties of perception and volition being primary properties of the individual, the non-entity of chance, the certainty of free actions, the dependence of free-will upon motives, and those upon antecedent causes, the right exercise of our freedom being the channel whereby good is conveyed to us, the doctrine of universal Providence, the derivation of virtue from the provisions of Heaven, through the channel of human volition,

lition, the Attribute of Equity, the foundation of Justice upon expedience, the spiritual body surviving the carnal, and rendering us capable of preparation for the next life, because there can be no preparation nor alteration in an individual; the conformity of municipal laws respecting mankind, with the universal respecting created beings in general, whereby the former become our direction how to conduct ourselves agreeably to the latter.

These points appear to me clearly deducible from the knowledge we may gain by experience, and are the pillars without which I could not support the more important articles before specified, nor give them a solid consistence in my understanding: therefore must look upon them as deserving to be thoroughly considered and firmly fixed in mind among the necessary Credenda of philosophic Faith. But since the understandings of men are variously constituted, whoever can satisfy himself in his fundamentals upon other principles, may regard those I have laid down as mere speculations, for I did not propose them for any intrinsic value they might be supposed to contain, but only for the salutary persuasions following from them: therefore they become fundamentals or not, according to the consequences they will naturally produce.

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in the minds of particular persons. For use and happiness are the sole points ultimately to be considered, and whatever theory tends most effectually to secure a constant serenity of mind and steady industry in the prosecution of our own interest, and the good of others is the most valuable, and most carefully to be cultivated.

Nevertheless, there is this defect in all philosophic Credenda, that they cannot obtain a general reception even among the thoughtful, but each man has his own set peculiar to himself, which must greatly retard and weaken their effect. For Imagination, which we have shewn to be the seat of faith, the clearest convictions of understanding not deserving that name until they have made a firm lodgment there, is a sensitive faculty: it will not follow the surest guidance of reason without assistance of some mechanical operation. Wherefore twenty men may easier persuade one another into any thing by the mechanical workings of sympathy, that is, by continually chiming together in the same notion, than one man can establish it firmly in himself by the force of his understanding, among nineteen dissentients.

Since then imagination so hardly follows understanding when most vigorous, what can we expect it to do in the bulk of mankind,

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who want leisure and opportunity for improving their faculties to full maturity? They must necessarily take up their opinions upon trust, but not knowing whom to trust, would have no opinions at all, nor other guidance than their own accidental fancies. Were men of thought unanimous in one scheme of natural Religion, they might easily draw the rest of the world after them; and were that scheme a good one, it might perhaps answer all the purposes wanted from it; but this is not likely to happen in our days, nor the days of our children, or children's children. Why then should we not rather choose to effect the same purposes by the opinions publicly established among us, which are so easily applicable thereto, and which Divine Providence appears to have directed, by having given them so general admission? only taking care to prevent their being turned by perverse misrepresentations, as too frequently has been done to opposite purposes.

17. Men in general, as I observed just now, take up their opinions upon trust, either from the authority of persons they revere, or example of persons among whom they continually converse; and are more confident in the certainty of what they take this way, than any philosopher in the discoveries of his science; yet they will be more secure to continue

tinue firm and unshaken, if enabled to give a reason for the faith that is in them. But the reasons to work effectually upon them must be such as will tally with the model of their understanding, to which the nice investigations of nature can scarce be rendered intelligible, nor the fine lines of connection running among them discernible; they can much easier apprehend the evidences of facts, and be made sensible of the conclusions resulting therefrom.

The belief of miracles, signs, and wonders, having been actually worked by almighty Power, of remote events having been foretold, immediate revelations vouchsafed to particular persons, of God having united himself to one man so as that all the acts and words of that man were the acts and words of God, and this done in transcendent mercy for restoring the human race from a state of misery to a state of happiness, his having declared life and immortality open to all, and risen from the dead as an earnest of our resurrection, the promise of divine assistance to co-operate with our endeavours, the persuasion of our minds sometimes actually feeling the effect of such assistance, the strong injuctions to resist all inordinate passion and appetite, and allurement of present pleasure, to bear an universal good will to our fellow-

creatures;

creatures, to expect ample reward for every conquest over ourselves, and every good office performed to one another, to do all things for the glory of God, and the placing that glory in a lively sense of his Omnipotence, his never sleeping Providence, his mercy, his loving kindness, his righteousness and holiness, ordering all his dispensations for our good, so that no evil shall befal us but he will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it: the firm belief of these points must, in the dullest apprehensions, beget a persuasion instigating to the practice of prudence and benevolence, and render such practice a perpetual source of content, and hope, and self-satisfaction.

The authority of the Scriptures, dictated by the unerring wisdom of God, shorten the way to useful knowledge within a length that the weakest faculties can hold out; and prove a readier, plainer guide in matters of doctrine or duty, than the best enlightened human reason pursuing its course by long intricate deductions of one consequence from another: So that whereas it was a common saying among the philosophers, that truth lies hidden at the bottom of the well; the firmly-rooted Christian may say, that all necessary truths are raised up to the surface by the written word,

word, where they stand apparent in such legible characters as that he who runs may read.

18. It does not fall within my province to examine the evidences whereon the authority of Scripture is founded, nor truth of the facts, and peculiar doctrines recorded there; this is the proper business of divines, to whom I shall leave it: I mean no more than to attempt a rational explanation of what has been there inculcated concerning the necessity and efficacy of faith, by help of the principles already maintained in this Chapter; agreeably to my general purpose of working a reconcilement between Reason and Revelation in those points wherein they have been set at widest variance by unbelievers. In order whereto it will be expedient to touch upon that controversy formerly much agitated among Christians, relating to the preference between Faith and Works, whether of the two operates immediately to our benefit, or is recommendable only for the sake of the other. Which nevertheless I take to be a needless, unprofitable question: for since faith and works must constantly go together, it is not at all material which of them is the valuable possession, because whoever has them both, may be sure of having the right; and whoever falls deficient in one, deceives himself if he thinks he has the other.

Yet

Yet how unavailing soever the determination of this point may be for common use in the conduct of life, I apprehend it may throw some light upon the subject of our present enquiry. If then by Benefit be meant such as we can receive upon earth, I must clearly give the preference to works: for the benefit redounding to me from another, depends upon the greatness of the services he does me, not at all upon his intention, or persuasion of its being a duty; and his intention is no otherwise valuable to me than as it prompts him to do the services, which, provided they be effectually done, it is all one whether they were done out of good-will, or vanity, or self-interest, or through mistake.

It is commonly said that a man had better have a knave for his steward than a fool; because the one will cheat you himself, but the other will suffer every body else to cheat you. And the case is the same with respect to a man's management of his own interests in the world, which he will pursue more successfully by having large abilities, than a right disposition of mind.

But with respect to our interests in futurity, which are incomparably more valuable, the case is widely different; for though it be said our works follow us, it is the remembrance of them only that follows, to be an evidence of

of the disposition and tenor of mind producing them; for the works themselves can yield nothing advantageous to our condition then, nor furnish materials we shall be capable of enjoying. Whether or no I can improve my own or my neighbour's health, or fortune, or reputation, or learning, or pleasures, it will be all one to both a hundred years hence; any farther than as the making such improvements are exercises of my own virtues, or give him larger opportunities for the exercises of his. Therefore in estimating the goodness of actions, the motive and temper of mind wherewith they were performed, where it can be certainly known, is the sole thing to be considered: no matter whether the good done be great or small, if the benevolence were hearty and strong, the deed is of equal value to the performer.

We know, the widow who cast in her two mites, which make a farthing, to charitable uses, was declared to have given more than the rich men who threw in their talents, that is, more productive of good effects in the next world, though certainly less beneficial to the poor receiving it in this; and that greater profit arose wholly from her greater zeal, which prompted her to part with all that she had beyond that of the rich men who gave of their abundance: and had the widow, as she

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was going along to the treasury, found a purse of gold, though she might have done more good therewith than she could with her farthing, she would not have been the better woman, nor have found any thing in the purse to add a grain to the piety and charity she brought with her from home.

The only true estate for ever we can purchase by our care and diligence, lies in the sentiments of the heart, for the virtues as well as all other desires, depend upon our persuasions; we desire things according to the ideas of them in our imagination; not indeed always according to the conviction of our reason, for this does not always beget an apprehension in the internal sense equal to itself, but whatever we strongly apprehend will be good and satisfactory in the possession, never fails to excite our desire: so that such as our habitual persuasions are, such will be our prevailing desires, and such our ordinary tenor of conduct. Hence it appears that Faith, taken in its utmost extent, including every salutary persuasion, is the only possession primarily valuable; and good works depending in great measure upon opportunities and external causes, can no otherwise be placed to the credit of our account than as they manifest it, and as the practice of them

contributes most of any thing to invigorate and encrease it.

19. If it be asked in what manner faith will operate to our future benefit, the pious Christian has a ready answer, that it is by engaging the bountiful favour of God towards us: for having promised that whoever believeth shall be saved, he will reward all such as have obeyed his voice and trusted in his word, giving them eternal life and unspeakable happiness, by his own immediate act and almighty Power. But since this answer may not satisfy some, who fancy that God does nothing unless by the instrumentality of second causes, and by certain stated laws of nature, I shall endeavour to shew a probability, that he has actually made such provision of causes, in the constitution of the human frame, as that our persuasions here naturally effect our condition hereafter.

It is generally holden upon the best authorities, as well of reason as religion, and has been confirmed by several observations in former chapters, that this life is a preparation for the next: now one cannot well imagine a preparation made, unless by some alteration or better disposition of parts; but what change or new disposition of parts can take place in an individual which has no parts? From whence it seems necessarily to follow, that

that the human soul, when departed from the body, remains still a compound, consisting of an individual spirit, vitally united to some material system, serving it for organs of perception and instruments of action, as our limbs and bodily senses serve us upon earth; and in this system the preparation is made, by disposing it for better performing the functions that will be wanted from it hereafter. For being, while enclosed in the body, the inner chamber we inhabit, and medium whereby we receive all our sensations from external objects, or reflections occurring from our imagination, and beginning the motions propagated onward to our limbs, or bringing up ideas before us in voluntary reflection it must be affected by whatever passes with us here. Transient sensations and motions may be supposed to affect it for the moment only of their action; but habitual persuasions, casting up their ideas constantly in the same train, are likely to work a durable effect, disposing the fibres, shaping the limbs, and determining the powers of the spiritual body: so that it will go out differently formed and capacitated according to the mould wherein it has lain, and according to the impressions received from the thoughts, and words, and deeds flowing from good or evil habits. And this way it may be easily understood, how we

may lay up treasures in heaven by means of a strong and lively faith, exemplified in the steady practice of all good works we have ability and opportunity to perform.

20. For though we have seen that good works are of none avail in themselves to our future benefit, yet are they the proper test whereby to try the genuineness of our faith: for all persuasions are not faith, some of them are merely speculative, and indifferent, others are pernicious, and destructive of our future interests. But we can make no anatomical or physical discoveries of the spiritual body, to instruct us how it lies enclosed in the corporeal machine, with what nerves it connects, what trains of thought or action of the animal spirits will contribute to give it health and vigour, or to enfeeble and disorder it: nor can we come at any serviceable knowledge concerning it, unless from the same ground whereon we may judge of all other things unknown and unseen; I mean, the idea of that Power who is the maker and disposer of things visible and invisible, and has disposed them both upon one plan, so as to make the former our direction for the measures relative to the latter.

From hence we may rationally conclude, that whatever persuasions best promote the happiness of human life, introducing a constant

stant serenity of mind and steady industry in the prosecution of our own and each other's interests, will prove the most salutary and nourishing to the spiritual body, or little fœtus forming and fashioning within us. Therefore just and lively sentiments of God, of his Attributes, his Providence, and administration of both worlds, adapting the laws of each to the uses of the other, may be deemed the fundamental of natural Religion, and the true saving Faith.

If we have recourse to the Scriptures, we shall find there the faith in Christ declared to be a fundamental without which no man can be saved; and certainly what God has declared necessary must be acknowledged so without dispute; for even supposing faith to operate by natural means, he best knows the constitution of the spiritual body, and what will prove advantageous to it: therefore none who believes the Scriptures to be the word of God, can doubt of this being a fundamental. But we have seen, towards the close of our Chapter upon the Trinity, that fundamentals are of two sorts; those essentially, such as operating directly to our benefit, and those derivatively fundamentals, because necessary to support the former, and deriving their value from the others which they support: the question then is, whether faith in Christ and his

his peculiar doctrines be a fundamental of the first, or of the second sort.

If we observe the general tenor of the Scriptures, without laying too much stress upon single detached texts, we shall find them recommend a sober, righteous, and godly life, doing the Will of God, and reposing a full trust in the wisdom and goodness of his dispensations, otherwise called Coming to the Father, as requisites necessary to Salvation. But we can come to the Father, during our continuance upon earth, none otherwise than by entertaing just and worthy sentiments of him, which if strong, and habitually inculcated upon our minds, cannot fail of producing a good life, inclining us stedfastly to do his Will, and inspiring a confidence in his protection and government. Thus we see that coming to the Father, stands as a fundamental upon the authority both of reason and Scripture, nor have we ground in either to imagine, that it is not the sole essentially fundamental, completely operating to salvation: for I do not recollect it is anywhere expressed in the Scriptures, that any man who cometh to the Father, by what way soever he arrives, shall be rejected by him.

But they declare, that faith in Christ is the only way by which we can arrive thither: therefore coming to the Son becomes a necessary

cessary fundamental, because it is the sole passage leading into that which was originally so.

21. There are people who conceit themselves, that they can come to the Father without passing through the Son: if they can, I shall not scruple to pronounce them in a state of salvation; but whether they can or no belongs not to us to determine, for who art thou that judgest another's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Our Christian charity, which we are told is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, but believeth all things, hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil, should incline us to judge favourably of our fellow-servants. And that we may not want foundation so to do, let us remember, that access to the Father is obtained by gradual approaches, some of which must be previous even to the passage through the Son: for he has told himself, that no man can come to the Son, except the Father draw him. And this matter stands exemplified in Cornelius the centurion, who was accepted of God while yet an unbeliever; and this distant approach he had made under guidance of his natural lights, procuring him an opening into the only way leading to salvation. Nor have we room to doubt that in all ages, there have been and still are many Cornelii in the

the world, alike accepted of God, who therefore will not withhold from them the means necessary for their final happiness; but since he has not vouchsafed them directions by an Angel, nor provided a Peter at hand to instruct them in his gospel, we may depend upon his having contrived other methods in his laws of nature and courses of Providence, which shall prove as effectual towards putting them into the right way of life and immortality.

I shall not have occasion to repeat what has been urged in the 12th, 13th, and 14th sections of the last Chapter; for if God be good, and would not that any should perish, but that all should attain everlasting life, and if Christ be the only sure and certain way thereto, both which we must believe upon the authority of the gospel, there needs little argumentation to prove, that this will sooner or later be opened to every man; and since there is a degree of approach towards the Father, preparatory to the passage through the Son, we ought to regard those to whom the gospel has never been preached, or who have been unavoidably drawn away by bad education or ill company from listening to it, or to whom the doctrines contained there have been injudiciously represented, so as to make them repugnant to calm and unprejudiced

dicted reason, all these we ought to regard as being in the preparatory state of acceptance before God, provided we find they have sincerely endeavoured to approach as near towards him as the natural lights afforded them would serve to direct. And though we must not believe them actually saved, nor yet upon the road to salvation, we may, consistently with our Christian principles, esteem them travellers equipped with all necessary accoutrements for the journey, and ready to set out upon the right road, whenever an opening suitable to their understanding shall be granted.

In the mean while it will become us to consider them as persons interested in the same hopes with ourselves, though perhaps at a remoter distance, who will one day become our fellow travellers, members of the same spiritual body; and to forward them in their approaches to the Father, by all kind of good offices and assistance in our power to give, or their capacity to receive; joining with them in such exercises of human reason as will lead into the purest sentiments of natural Religion; for this is an essential part of the revealed; and this way we may be helpful to one another without retarding our progress in any other knowledge it may be expedient for us to attain.

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22. But our main concern lies with the rule of our own conduct, not with passing curious judgments upon that of other people: therefore we to whom the truths and doctrines of the gospel have been propounded in a manner satisfactory to our understanding, and who stand convinced upon observation of human nature, that mankind cannot be brought into right sentiments of the Father by philosophical speculations, ought diligently to pursue the road whereinto we have been granted entrance: for whatever ways there may be for other persons, this is our only way whereby we can attain salvation. Nevertheless, we are to remember, this is only the way, not the place of our destination; and he who sticks in the way might as well never have entered upon it.

For faith in the Father would suffice without faith in the Son, were there a possibility of attaining it without: had we not been lapsed creatures, we should have wanted no redemption, and consequently could have known of none to believe in; and since we have promise of the Comforter, who will teach us all things, it is possible he may one day so rectify and strengthen the understandings of mankind, as that the light of their reason alone may lead them into just sentiments of God, without the peculiar doctrines and instructions

structions of the gospel. But this time, if ever it shall come upon earth, is yet far remote: therefore it behoves us carefully to use the means put into our hands for enlightening the darkness and assisting the weakness of our faculties.

On the other hand, faith in Christ, without coming to the Father, is of none avail to any: the devils believe and tremble, but their faith proves a torment to them, because they have not a right faith in God, as appears manifest from their inveterate malice and indefatigable opposition against the provisions of his government; and Christ himself declares, that if any has so strong faith in him as to prophesy, to cast out devils, to do many mighty works in his name, yet if they be workers of iniquity, which indicates their want of a sound faith in God, he will thrust them from him as aliens and reprobates. From hence we may learn not to place our dependence upon orthodoxy, or zeal in defending it, or praying, psalm-singing, reading, meditating, or the punctual performance of religious institutions and ceremonies; all which are of no value otherwise than as means to strengthen in us proper sentiments of God and his Providence, and these sentiments, if attained, will infallibly show themselves in our practice: therefore in all our religious duties

duties we ought to regard the influence they will have upon our temper of mind and our practice, and may judge of their propriety by the effect we find them take thereupon; for ye shall know men by their works.

Nevertheless, it is not works, but faith, that operates to salvation; therefore no man need disturb himself that he cannot rise to those heights of virtue and clearness of understanding, or do so much good, as he wishes; for the disposition and persuasions of the mind are as well evinced in small abilities as in great. A right faith is compatible with the common business and transactions of life: therefore it is a spurious piety, that makes men desirous to lay out their whole time in exercises of devotion. Whoever possesses just notions of God must believe he orders all things in perfect wisdom: since then he in his Providence has placed us in a situation that renders an attention necessary to our bodily wants, our worldly concerns, the conveniencies and even pleasures of our fellow-creatures, we may show our obedience in performing these little offices with innocence and propriety according to the occasion, as well as the higher duties and acts of Religion. For we are servants whose business it is to fulfil the task before us; we must not expect to be always employed in attendance upon

upon our Master's person, nor ought to esteem any work unprofitable or trifling, which the present circumstances we are placed in require us to execute.

23. From what has been urged in the last Section we may observe, that, although Faith be the sole principle operating to salvation, yet there may be faith without salvation. The Apostle James asks, 'If a man say that he has faith, can faith save him? Peter exhorts to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' and so forth: Paul declares that if he had all faith so as to remove mountains, but had not charity, he were nothing: And a greater than them has declared that those who had so great faith as to work miracles in his name, if they were workers of iniquity, shall nevertheless be rejected at the last day. How then shall we reconcile these seeming contradictions, Whosoever believeth shall be saved, and hath eternal life; If a man believe, yet his faith cannot save him, he must add many other things to it, he may still be a very nothing, and rejected at the last day? There must certainly be some variation of sense among the terms employed in these propositions; and it is most likely to be found in that of the word Faith. There is a lively and a dead faith, a right faith and a wrong faith, or heresy: but this

this observation will help us little: for it can scarce be suspected that the faith spoken of in the texts alluded to above, can be understood of a weak or heretical faith.

Let us then consider that in popular language, that is in the language of the poor, wherein the gospel was preached, the same words are used not only for things a little different from one another, but often for different extents of the same thing. Thus the word Church stands sometimes for whole body of Christians, as when we bless ourselves for having been born within the pale of the Church: sometimes for the doctrine and discipline established by law, as when we distinguish between the Church and Dissenters: and sometimes for the Clergy in exclusion of the Laity, as when we talk of the powers or revenues of the Church. In like manner faith is employed frequently to denote the belief of some one particular article, and as frequently the whole system of religious sentiments which every man respectively is capable of attaining: in which latter sense only it deserves the title of a saving faith. For we see that St. Paul, where he speaks of Faith in the restrained sense, calling it a shield, does not think that alone sufficient to enable his Ephesians to stand against the assaults of the devil, but they must put on the

the girdle, the breast-plate, the cuirass, the helmet, the sword, and all these weapons, offensive and defensive, which jointly compose the Panoply or compleat armour of God. A deficiency in one material article destroys the essence of a saving faith, which naturally leads men, where they observe such deficiency, to appropriate the name of faith to that particular article; because a right persuasion upon that is the only thing wanting to compleat the Panoply. And since all Christian communities have their peculiar distinguishing tenets, such as the bodily presence, the divine institution of Episcopacy, profaneness of forms, ceremonies, or vestments, the belief that Christ died for Me, and the like; they are apt to place orthodoxy solely in them, and lay out their whole zeal upon them in utter neglect of every thing else, or rather to the drawing of men's attention from other points, at least equally important, wherein all Christians agree. Whereas orthodoxy lies in rectitude of sentiment upon all branches of our duty, not in the characteristic doctrines of any Church, however infallible: nor does faith, as we have shewn before, consist in a bare, however sincere, assent of the understanding, but in a lively, strong, habitual persuasion of the mind. Then let the gifted preacher be pleased to reflect, that it

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is as much his office to work practical persuasions out of what his audience already know, as to encrease their knowledge; to inculcate and draw a profit from those truths they will never hear controverted, as to recover or guard them from errors whereinto they may fall by seduction.

There is still another much more allowable cause for restraining the appellation of faith to a part only of its substance: for since the whole cannot be inculcated at once, but there is some one step introductory to the rest, the teacher, who is to deal with novices, must dwell solely upon that until it be effected. This may serve to explain those texts wherein it is expressly declared, that whosoever believeth in the Son, or believeth that Jesus is the Christ, shall be saved: for this was the one thing needful for the Jew or the Gentile to make him a convert, and bring him within the privilege of the Redemption. We have shown in the last Chapter, that God has marked out to us various lengths of race for each of us to run in this world, and he that runs the length allotted him, be it no more than a single step, is safe: because more can be expected from no man than was put into his power to perform. But the man who has been bred up from his cradle in the belief of Jesus being the Christ, has no ground to think

think himself safe with this alone; nor that he has nothing else to do than hunt lectures and sing hymns for impressing this article more strongly upon his mind. The whole tenor of the Scriptures declares that such faith will not suffice for him that has the means of adding to it, for there are other things needful besides: but he must go on to work a lively faith in all the divine truths which Jesus taught, each whereof becomes successively the one thing needful, as he has opportunity offered for acquiring it.

24. One remark more remains to be made for compleating the idea of faith: I have styled it a species of persuasion; now persuasion strictly taken is nothing more than a quick apprehension or unreserved assent of the mind to the truth of some proposition: which can never merit the title of a virtue, nor exemplify itself in our conduct, being only a supply of ideal causes directing us how to proceed, but suggesting no final causes or motives urging us to make use of their information. Therefore to make the persuasion beneficial and a virtue, it must carry something desirable in the aspect, which may touch us sensibly on the beholding it. Hence it comes that professions of faith run in a different turn or phrase from the declaration of our opinion concerning common things.

A man may express his adherence to the Copernican system sufficiently by saying he believes the Sun stands still, and the Earth and other planets circle round him continually: but it is not enough to prove his orthodoxy to say he believes a God, that Jesus is the Christ; that there is a Holy Ghost; we are taught in our creeds to acknowledge a belief in God the Father almighty, in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, &c. Which particle In, besides a bare assent, as to a certain truth, implies a trust or affecting expectation of desirable benefits accruing from God, in his three distinct persons or methods of operation, and from the other articles contained.

I have taken notice, in the Chapter of Honour, that the word Sentiment is sometimes understood of a judgment of the mind upon the truth or falsehood of some proposition, but oftener and more usefully of an inward feeling, a moral sense, or appetence towards the thing apprehended. For a sense of honour does not merely bring us to the acknowledgment that such or such a proceedure is laudable, but annexes thereto an admiration, a degree of ardency or hearty wish to follow the like. This I take to be the true import of an inward feeling, whenever receiving a rational construction, which I fear it seldom does

does in the minds of those who are most fond of having it in their mouths: they seeming most commonly to apprehend it the effect of a supernatural illumination, given rather to enlighten the understanding, than to warm the heart. Such internal sense then, superadded to the sincere acknowledgment of religious truths, is necessary to constitute a virtue, and a perfect faith in God, or Christ, or his doctrines: for no persuasions whatever, unless touching some spring of affection, or introductory of some satifactory idea complacent to the mind, can either secure peace to our own minds, or urge us to the prosecution of our duty towards God, our neighbour, or ourselves.

And I know not whether a feeling concern for distant enjoyments be not the first article and necessary foundation of all faith: for a man who is wholly guided by the present impulses of appetite, cannot reap any benefit from Religion in so short a time as the expiration of a week; not that I deny there is an immediate satisfaction and benefit in the exercise of religious thoughts and practices, but then it must be to those who have a relish for them, which relish, where wanting, can never be acquired in seven days; therefore he who cares for nothing beyond the pleasures of the current week, how firmly soever

he may be persuaded there is a God and a Christ, can never have a faith in either, because he must want that joy in the contemplation of those truths, and value for the remote advantages resulting from them, which are essential ingredients of the virtue. This want I apprehend the cause of that multitude of practical atheists lamented among us, though we have few speculative: for men are well enough persuaded of the consequences of their evil doings, but those consequences being remote, they do not regard them. It is this hardens the highwayman and the street-robber in their wickedness: they expect to be hanged some time or other, and look upon hanging as an evil; they hope however to escape this year at least, so proceed upon the maxim, A short life and a merry one; Sing, hang sorrow, cast away care! and fortify themselves with an utter insensibility against whatever may happen a year hence.

It is the sensibility belonging to faith, which brings it to tally with the virtue of prudence; for we have seen in the Chapter upon that article, that moral prudence does not lie in knowledge nor persuasion, for he who knows most is the more imprudent upon that account, if he has not a sensibility stimulating him to make the best use of the lights he possesses. But prudence was always esteemed

esteemed the root of the other Cardinal virtues, which are several branches growing from the same tree: therefore the name of Wise-man stood for that ideal character supposed to possess them all; for whoever was compleatly wise, must of consequence be courageous, and temperate, and just, and benevolent. So Faith is the necessary foundation of the two other Theological virtues, which no man can attain without a firm persuasion of the truths whereon they are supported; and whoever has such persuasion, together with an affecting sense of the Divine goodness sending every evil for our good, and the mutual connection of interests, or that Christ will look upon whatever is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself, cannot fail of being inspired with a continual glowing hope and unreserved Charity. From whence we may conclude that Faith often stands as the representative of them; and whenever spoken of as the compleatly saving principle, it must be understood in that comprehensive sense, including the sister Graces, who cannot walk the rough paths of earth, without leaning on its strong-built shoulders.

25 From all that has been offered in the foregoing pages, may be understood, the reasonableness of the Scripture's ascribing Salvation, Sanctification, and Justification to Faith,

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and laying down that the just shall live by Faith. Enough has been said already to explain in what manner we are saved by this virtue: whatever works we perform here, being of none other avail to our future interests, than as they manifest and nourish our habitual dispositions of mind.

And if we recollect the description that has been given of Holiness in the Chapter upon that article, it will appear a negative quality, implying an exemption from inordinate passions, wicked and sensual desires; which a just and lively sense of the divine Attributes and government must effectually banish. Wherefore those zealots proceed upon mistaken grounds who place sanctity in continual acts of devotion, and having God always in our thoughts; for it consists in suffering nothing contrary to his laws to intrude there, and making obedience to his Will the ruling principle of action: nor are the most common transactions of life, provided there be no inordinate indulgence of appetite in them, any interruptions in a holy life.

26. Justification, it has been said, is a term taken from the law-courts; wherein there are but two methods of defence, either to deny the fact, or to justify. If a man be impeached for beating another, he may justify by shewing it was done in his own necessary defence:

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if for false imprisonment, he may justify under the warrant of a lawful magistrate. Thus in all human judicatures, the justification must be taken from some external circumstances which can be proved to the court, because man cannot penetrate into the secret purposes of the heart; but at the bar of conscience, the intention justifies the deed; how unlucky soever the event may fall out, yet if the design were good, and proceeded in to the best of our honest judgment, no blame lies at the door. Therefore it is not the outward acts we perform, but the inward sentiment prompting us to them, that makes our proper justification. From hence we may gather confidence in the rectitude of our conduct when having the testimony of a conscience void of offence: for however ineffectual our endeavours may prove, or the result of them turn out contrary to our wish, however our understanding may be darkened or our imagination over-clouded, yet if conscious that our hearts be set right towards God, we have a solid ground for that self-satisfaction which is one of the five requisites to happiness.

Nevertheless, our uprightness of heart can justify such actions only as it gives birth to: wherefore it is an erroneous and dangerous notion that the Saint can never sin. It is well known

known in history, that some zealots, in the times of civil and religious confusion, thought so highly of their sanctity as to imagine it justified them in any licentiousness, debauchery, or wickedness they had a mind to; and though these lengths of extravagance are happily ceased, yet are there some among us who presume so far upon their strength and earnestness of persuasion in one or two particular articles of Religion, as to render them careless of their morals or their conduct upon the common occurrences of life and intercourse among mankind; but esteem themselves justified in their censoriousness, peevishness, contempt, and uncharitableness for their fellow-creatures, their indolence and negligence in the duties of their station, or indulgence to certain favourite follies, by the fervency of their faith in seasons of devotion. But each season can only be estimated by what passed in it: winter is never the warmer for the preceding summer having been hot, nor can the sanctity one of deed change the nature of another, which had no sanctity of its own: for our deeds must be tried by the principles from whence they severally issued. A man sued for battery or false imprisonment, can never justify by shewing, that upon other occasions he was used to behave peaceably and honestly, and has been scrupulously careful

ful to avoid acts of oppression: the only question being what warrant he had for the particular fact whereof he stands charged.

Thus it appears that we are not justified by faith in every thing we do when not proceeding from that principle, for whatever is not of faith is sin: but it may be said, this idea of justification does not reach the true Scripture sense, for that if it be a law term, it is not a term taken from our Courts, but from the Jewish law, wherein justified stood opposed to condemned, and related to the person rather than the deed; so that a man may be adjudged just and righteous, notwithstanding some human frailties that have led him into actions unwarrantable and manifestly unjust. It remains then to enquire how faith can justify the person under these circumstances, who must have stood condemned without it.

It is the received opinion, as well among Philosophers as Christians, that physical evil is the certain consequence of moral: therefore no creature can attain a life of happiness without a total exemption from vice, and a compleat possession of all the virtues. For he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole law, that is, liable to the attack of evil, which can only be shut out by an entire obedience or spotless innocence: like a town

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which is not safe so long as one breach remains open in the wall. As the several virtues bear a near affinity with each other, and none of them can be had in perfection without having them all, it has been usual to take the name of some one among them to stand as a representative of all the rest. The Philosophers have pitched upon Prudence or Wisdom, and the Sacred Writings, except Solomon, who for the most part employs the philosophic term upon Justice or Righteousness, for the general appellation comprehending the whole body of virtue compleat in all its parts. Therefore the Stoics insisted that the Wise-man, and he only, was invariably happy: yet at the same time allowed, that this Wise-man was an ideal character, nowhere existing upon earth, but that all the men ever living here, were fools, and madmen, and miserable. Nor do I imagine the other sects, though less fond of calling names, could pronounce upon any particular person, that he had a degree of wisdom sufficient to secure him against all attacks of evil. It is not my business to examine how they accounted for this depravity of human nature, nor by what means they expected to be invested with such consummate wisdom in another life, as was necessary to make it a life

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of unabating happiness; I am only to search out for a rational idea of the Scripture doctrine upon these points.

The Scriptures, as interpreted by Christians in general, declare that Man was made upright, until by Adam's transgression he lost his character of uprightness, and fell under the condemnation of being a sinful and miserable creature; which condemnation was not barely of his person, but of his human nature, and extended to all his posterity. For condemnation does not make a man wicked, but finds him so: it relates to the manifestation of a past depravity, till then unknown, for every man has a right to be deemed innocent until the contrary is proved. Therefore the act of disobedience in Adam was not the bane which has worked a distemperature into our constitution, but was itself the trial to shew what human nature is, and consequently must avail alike against all who should ever partake of that nature, as well as against Adam. For you cannot deny that act to have been a sin, but it could not be the cause of itself, nor work the distemperature from whence itself proceeded: it was no more than an evidence or judgment of a distemperature lurking in humam nature, though you could not discern it before.

Had you seen Adam while in Paradise,

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you would have judged him possessed of such Wisdom or Righteousness, as must have ensured him happiness, till upon finding him foiled by the serpent, you alter your judgment; you now stand convinced he had a mixture of folly and frailty in his composition unobserved before, and condemn him as a weak imperfect creature, unable to resist temptations that will lead into grievous mischiefs. And upon the strength of the same evidence you may pronounce the like sentence of condemnation upon every child newly born, not as guilty of actual sin, nor obnoxious to any punishment due to the offence of his primogenitor, but as inheriting the like weakness of nature liable to be overcome by the prevalence of appetite, and every art of seduction, so as to be drawn thereby into courses which can end in nothing beside eternal misery. Thus the Scripture concludes all under sin and the spiritual death, from which no man can exempt himself by his natural strength; for in Adam all have sinned, that is, been proved by the bad success of the trial made upon him, to be partakers of a nature incapable of perfect righteousness.

Nevertheless, what was wanting in the original constitution of human nature, God has been graciously pleased to supply by the interposition

terposition of his almighty power in the Christian dispensation, uniting himself in his second Person to the man Jesus, enabling him to perform an unsinning obedience, and voluntarily lay down his life upon the cross: who by his example, probably exhibited in the Hades, as well as upon earth, together with the doctrines and institutions delivered by him and influence of his Religion upon the world, will raise human nature some time or other, either in this life or the next, to that perfection which it had not received on its first formation. Thus death came upon all men by Adam, and in Christ all are made alive. But as a turnpike road is made for the convenience of all his Majesty's subjects, yet multitudes of subjects will never travel it; so though Christ lived and died for all, yet all will not reap the benefit of his coming. For he has only prepared the way and provided the aids needful for conducting to the completion of righteousness, but it is by faith that each particular man must enter upon the way.

Till such entry he remains in his natural state of condemnation, but the first step he takes upon the right road, which is done by faith in Christ, justifies him; and if he persevere in his progress by attaining faith in the comprehensive sense described in §. 23,

so far as his time of life and opportunities will permit, he may be pronounced a just or righteous man, in the same manner as the sucking child was pronounced a sinner; that is, not as possessed of actual righteousness, but as one who by the means and methods provided in the Christian dispensation, will infallibly be raised to it; for in the estimation of his character he may avail himself of the good improvement expectant therein, to which those means and methods are efficacious. This I take to be the true sense of imputed righteousness, and the application of Christ's merits to ourselves: for nothing passes immediately from him to us, nor does faith transfer a secret virtue or supernatural energy, which the freethinker would say carried the air of charm and magic, nor operate otherwise than by the effect it must naturally take upon our mind and motions. Neither can any man expect to become compleatly righteous in this world, but if he be justified or made just, it is only by having a reversion secured to him of righteousness in the world to come. Thus both condemnation and justification neither change nor declare a man's present condition, but that which the circumstances he stands in will unavoidably lead into: and the latter is rather the foundation of a sure and certain hope, than the investiture of an actual possession.

27. Then

27. Then for what is said, that the just shall live by faith, if it be understood that they shall attain eternal life thereby, this is the same as salvation, of which we have spoken before: if that the tenor of their conduct will be shaped thereby, this follows from the nature of human action, constantly determined by our desires and ideas, which depend upon our habitual persuasions. Therefore those in whose imagination the gratifications of appetite and enjoyment of present pleasures appear the most desirable good, will always act accordingly, making it the business of their lives to hunt after them: whereas such as are intimately possessed with a true and strong faith in God, his Providence and constitution of universal nature, will take it for their ruling principle; which, of course must render their actions conformable thereto, for the general aim of their desire will lie towards the benefits attainable by such actions. And though it be impracticable to take immediate direction from this principle in every minute instance, yet their other rules of conduct will be branched out from this, and it will lie ever wakeful in their minds to withhold them from following any unwarrantable desire repugnant thereto. So that it may be truly said the just shall live by faith, because

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it will infallibly produce a life of righteousness, and makes the essential difference between just and unj st.

And though I have all along supposed this to be faith in the Father, yet since no man can come to the Father unless through the Son, the same may with equal justice be affirmed of Faith in him: for if an adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel be the sole necessary means whereby a just sense of God can be effectually introduced, or kept alive and vigorous in the mind, the just may be said to live by faith in Christ, which secures to them that faith whereby they live, with as much propriety as a man is said to live upon his estate, though he does not eat the acres, nor cloath himself with the trees, but because with the rents and profits he purchases the necessaries and accommodations of life.

28. The words attempted to be explained in these three sections are of very little currency among us, and no wonder; for being taken from the Jewish language, there is a great hazard of their being misapplied and misunderstood: but there being still some sets of people very fond of spending their thoughts upon them, I was willing to lend a helping hand towards ascertaining their genuine and rational meaning. Yet since they are now grown

grown obsolete, it were perhaps expedient for the teacher to lay the old language wholly aside, and after examining carefully what was the sense intended originally to be conveyed therein, to deliver it in modern dialect more familiar and intelligible to his hearers: wherein it may possibly amount to no more than that the Christian Religion has rescued human nature from that impotence, and subjection under appetite and passion, which must have proved fatal; and has enabled mankind to attain such regularity of conduct, exemption from the prevalence of sensible objects, and degree of righteousness, as will be the sufficient preparative for a life of perfection and happiness in their next stage of being. But then this must be understood of the human race in general, and implies a connection of interests between the several members, so that the aid imparted to some, may, by some means of communication to be carried on in the next world, redound to the benefit of others; because multitudes are born and pass off this earthly stage without ever having an opportunity of reaping any benefit during their abode here.

What has been offered in the preceding sections concerning the essence of faith seems deserving a more accurate consideration, as being founded upon the sensitivo-rational

constitution of human nature, containing two faculties, understanding and imagination; the latter the executive power, by whose ministry alone the other can effectuate her resolves: and faith is the habit, setting the impulses of that to their proper direction. This idea will guide us in our judgments of a man's faith, which are commonly taken according to the rectitude or orthodoxy of his tenets: whereas in such estimation it is not so material to enquire what are his particular opinions, as what vigour and steadiness of persuasion he has in the best of those he holds; and if he have some erroneous notions, they may be presumed owing to his want of a full and habitual persuasion in the sound ones, which would have better cleared his optics.

This likewise may lead us into a right interpretation of Religion, by considering its manner of operation, and the uses wherefore it was calculated; which were not so much to inform the understanding, as to supply the place of it where deficient in the vulgar, and discipline imagination to obey the dictates of reason where better informed. Our rational faculty might answer our purposes much better than it does, if it were always properly employed, and had the inferior faculties constantly under command. What we want is, something to direct our thoughts

to the most profitable objects, and to impress the result of those thoughts upon the mind and memory, so as afterwards to rise spontaneously, and become a perpetual motive of action. This Religion performs by its authority, its doctrines, its institutions, and its general currency, turning reason into the proper channels of enquiry, and bringing the trains of imagination and springs of affection to take the course our best judgment would recommend. Bare knowledge does not constitute the moral character: he who knows much is a good speculatist, yet may still be the carnal man, actuated most commonly by the present impulse, or toiling in the service of some ruling passion, which happens to predominate in his fancy. But he who has brought his knowledge of what is most beneficial to become an habitual vivid persuasion and ruling principle of conduct, is the spiritual or just man who lives by faith, so far as the imperfection of his present nature will permit.

CHAP. XVI.

HOPE.

THE just who live by Faith, shall not want the perpetual Feast of Hope, heart-cheering manna, peculiar food of man: for sensitive pleasure and gratification of appetite he shares in common with the brutes, and tastes perhaps with far inferior relish to theirs. Indulgent Nature, kind to the meanest of her offspring, has prepared sensual delights for them: food, and warmth, and rest, the commerce of the sexes, and wanton gambols on earth, in air, or water, fill up their employment, and make the value of their lives. They enjoy the momentary pleasure as it comes; they move by impulse of objects striking their senses, and follow present instinct even in making provision against future wants, whereof they have no apprehension.

But to man she has given understanding, far-sighted faculty, looking forward perpetually upon good to come, and finding present solace in the prospect. At his first entrance into life he differs little from his brother animals,

mals, affected only by sense like them; but the joyful glee of youthful blood quickly subsides; the charm of novelty, that rendered every motion and every scene engaging, flies off; pleasures of sense fall rarely in his way, and his hours would pass irksome, were he not to borrow amusement from those in view before him. The mental eye then opens, to let in joys the senses cannot furnish, the joys of expectation anticipating pleasures yet to come.

But what is that troop of earth-born hopes first glittering in the eye of young imagination, like those lucid vapours that at even o'er the marish glide meteorous? Playthings, gewgaws, diversions, the uncontroled liberty of manhood; followed in riper years by fancied scenes of riches, power, honours, or martial, poetic, and philosophic fame. Such prospects severally may sooth the fond fancy for the present, but quickly involve in the miry sloughs of disappointment; or if successful, prove fallacious of the expectation, or at best they satiate in the possession; for he is counted the most wretched of men who is come to the end of all his hopes.

But thou, celestial Grace, soft-handed sister and inseparable companion of saving Faith, foretaste of heavenly joys, perpetual source of living waters, refreshing the heart with

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with never-failing delight, thou alone canst exhibit an unfading prospect; for thou endest not but in endless, uncloying fruition. Chance and external circumstance have no power over thee, disaster, sickness, and adversity make us cling closer to thee; ignorance and involuntary mistake cannot remove thee from us, nor can any thing besides our own wilful misconduct turn thy face away. Present reward of virtue, the charm that makes her amiable; thou spurrest on our industry, sweetenest our labours, and givest confidence in time of trial; the glory thou settest before us strengthens our fortitude, and blunts the point of those allurements which would urge to intemperance; the serenity, chearfulness, and inward satisfaction wherewith thou overspreadest the mind, making it easy in itself, renders it more susceptible of hearty goodwill to others. Sole remedy of pressing evils, the balmy salve to heal our sores, the security in danger that no intolerable evil shall befal: thine anchor firmly fixed in solid ground, holds us steady amid the pressing blasts of passion, the tempestuous storms of fortune, and boiling torrents of vice and folly; and when the seas are open, the cheering gales waft us smoothly to the desired port.

Do thou inspire me with thine exhilarating spirit, giving energy and courage, but not intoxi-

intoxicating: for the meanest, well-intended labours may claim thy patronage. Afford it, then, benign, soft-shining goddess, diffuse thy mild but piercing rays upon my inward sense; that I may discern the tenacious bottom where thou lovest to cast thine anchor, the strong-connected golden chain whereby thou holdest to it, thy robes and vesture, thy countenance and person; and thence mark out wherein thou differest from those delusive phantoms that flatter mortal fancy, and in what few features they resemble thee.

2. For there is a degree of similitude between all hopes, because they all spring from the same affection in human nature. For as persuasion is the genus, whereof faith is a particular species, so the virtue we have now under contemplation, is a distinct species of that general propensity, prompting the mind to solace itself in the prospect of objects apprehended desirable and attainable. If we make an estimate of the enjoyments in human life, we shall find that much the greater part of them is supplied by hope; for sensations seldom satisfy, and then it is but for a moment: the large vacancies left in them are filled up by desire tending to some distant aim, and giving immediate pleasure in the steps taken to attain it. And this accounts for the horror we all have at the thoughts of anni-

annihilation, which would deliver us from all our fears, but then it affords no object for desire to feed on: for it is not insensibility that affrights us, we know this to be our portion in sound sleep, which yet we fall into without reluctance, because sleep, being of few hours duration, leaves room for the expectation of something to be done, and something to be enjoyed on the morrow; but hope is a necessary ingredient in genuine desire; for if desire fixes upon an end there are no hopes of ever obtaining, it degenerates into the tormenting passion Want.

Let us reflect how much of every day's employment is taken up, and every day's amusement furnished by the care of making provision for something beyond the present moment: it is this spurs on our activity, and gives a glee to the exercises of it; this sets our understanding at work to contrive for the morrow, and makes its well-contrived schemes delightful, even before they can take effect. This raises distant aims, that can please for months and years in the prosecution: it gives the gust to most of those called present pleasures, turns trifles into things of moment, and often proves more valuable than possession. The expectation of catching a paltry game constitutes the delight in sports of the field, and changes toilsome labour into amusement:

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our cards and dice were no diversions, unless for the prospect of winning an insignificant stake. In these little pastimes, and most of our common pursuits, there must be some rubs and chances in the way to make them a diversion; for there is none in packing the cards, or hunting a bag fox, where you are sure of getting your game without contrivance or trouble: whence it has been supposed, that hope cannot subsist without a mixture of fear. But this I apprehend to be the case only in things of small value in the possession, where the whole pleasure lies in the movement towards them, which would be of little duration and unengaging, were not the hazard of disappointment to assist in prolonging and varying the pursuit.

Therefore when fear and uncertainty enhance the pleasure, it is from some incidental circumstance, not as being of the essence of hope, which can often subsist in full vigour without them. A man may please himself with providing materials for building a house, in prospect of the conveniencies he shall find therein when finished; or with laying out and planting a garden, in contemplation of the shady walks, the arbors, the elegancies, the fruits to grow in it after a length of time; or with the reversion of an estate to fall in seven years hence; and all this not the less

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for his meeting with no disappointment in the prosecution of his schemes, nor ever entertaining a suspicion that his expectation may be frustrated. So there is no inconsistency in the expression of a sure and certain hope: for every solace of mind taken in the thought of a desirable good to come, with full assurance that it will come, deserves that appellation, and is the same kind of affection, different only in degree, as if the assurance were abated by a tincture of fear and uncertainty.

Our hopes and fears are the main springs that actuate our motions; and according as we proceed under the influence of either, our time passes agreeably or uneasily. Whoever could contrive means to live constantly upon hope, would be a happy man: for this when warm and lively, sweetens labour and alleviates pain, and furnishes a delicious entertainment, if the cup be not embittered by the apprehension of danger or disappointment.

3. Hope spreads her table most plentifully when served by Desire, that is, when there is something at hand to be done towards attaining its completion; for then it multiplies and approximates, making the several steps expedient to be taken, so many intermediate objects of hope successively as they occur: for else, if it be fervent, and have no work to keep

keep the active powers in play, it is apt to corrupt into impatience, which is one of the most grinding species of Want. Therefore I conceive it was happier for Jacob in being put to earn his mistress by a seven years service, than if he had only been promised her after waiting that time; because impatience might spend itself in assiduity to the task enjoined.

Nevertheless, an assurance of good to come can give delight, although no endeavours of our own be needful to procure it; and the pleasure rises in proportion to the degree of assurance, which will prove most durable when founded upon rational grounds; yet it too commonly stands upon another bottom, especially in sanguine and volatile tempers. For there being a great pleasure in believing, that what we like will certainly befal us, this alone often stands in lieu of evidence: it can work persuasion, without aid of conviction, and effectually shut the mind against every suggestion that might tend to invalidate it. When people set their hearts upon a thing strongly, you shall see them hope against hope, turn the most romantic possibility into a certainty, and possess themselves with assurance of succeeding in their expectations upon none other grounds than because the thought is soothing to their imagination. These hollow-grounded hopes, the

the airy fabric of self-indulging fancy, though pleasing for the present, prove very pernicious and often fatal in the consequences, slackening our industry, taking us off from the pursuit of real advantages we might have worked out, and making us let go the bird in hand for sake of two in the bush.

It is observed, that lotteries make the common people idle: every one that has but the eighth part of a ticket, promises himself a proportionable share in the great prize, and wastes his time in forecasting how to lay out the produce, when he should be employed in getting his livelihood. Young people just come into possession of a sum of money, justify themselves in squandering it away, upon a notion that they shall find twenty ways of raising a fortune again, though they could never yet muster up application enough to earn a sixpence. Tradesmen, newly entered upon business, set up their equipages, and spend upon the fancied profits of succeeding years. Vanity builds as much upon achievements that will be made, as upon works already perfected. How many projectors persist obstinately in their ruinous schemes, against all reason and experiment? How much do the orthodox in theory indulge themselves in vicious pleasures, upon full presumption of long life and health, and that repentance

repentance will come upon them of its own accord, just when needful, without their seeking it? In short, most of the hopes that tinsel the gay and busy hours of life, are fantastic, unsubstantial, precarious, and fragile, or quickly end in disappointment; or when attained, fall below the expectation, or furnish but a short career of employment in the pursuit, and require a continual supply of fresh aims to keep the thoughts in play, which else must stagnate, unless good fortune and external causes throw in new engagements just as the old ones begin to satiate.

Nor is mankind less subject to vain and imaginary fears, for fear will stand upon as narrow ground as hope: were there a lottery wherein one ticket should doom the owner to be hanged, the apprehension of drawing the fatal lot would terrify as much as the great prize elates; for fear multiplies chances, and makes a certain mischief of the remotest danger. Hopes and fears ordinarily chequer human life, yet though they mingle, it is like oil and water, they will not incorporate, but take their turns alternately in giving solace or uneasiness, and that sometimes in very quick successions: but which of them shall predominate depends in great measure upon constitution, upon chilness or warmth of the blood, objects surrounding, or sympathy from

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persons strongly affected with either. For we are often made to hope by others' hopes, and fear by seeing them affrighted; therefore persons of very sanguine or melancholy dispositions cannot do worse than in consorting with those of the same complexion.

4. This then being the case with all sublunary hopes, that they cannot secure a happy life without a lucky concurrence of circumstances not in our power to command; a competence of health and subsistence, a natural easiness of temper, a prudent education, keeping the mind clear of turbulent passions and restless desires, a taste for innocent amusement, a succession of practical aims to hold attention engaged, a quiet and peaceful situation with respect to things external: all which seldom coincide in the same person, nor continue without frequent interruptions. Since, then, this is the case of earthly hopes, let us look up for that hope which comes from heaven, which lies open to all, which when well grounded and rooted, can afford comfort in every situation, and which will never depart from us to the last moment of our lives.

The object of this hope, in its utmost extent is no less than the whole lot of our existence, which beheld by the eye of faith exhibits an incomparably larger proportion of

of enjoyment than trouble: and what few troubles there are, appear productive of good greatly overbalancing their pressure. But this extensive prospect is too large for imagination to grasp, unless in some few seasons of retirement, when we can stretch our faculties to the utmost verge of contemplation. The residence in the Mundane Soul, or that final state of happiness which is the effect of pure bounty, not of preparation or reward, like the distant stars, may chear the eye, but lies too remote to warm the heart with a gleam of feeling hope; nor would avail for common use, because we know of nothing that can be done for hastening our arrival, or improving our condition there. Wherefore it is enough for practical purposes to bound our thoughts within the consequences of our conduct here upon earth, and those in the succeding stages of our journey through matter, commonly called the next life; which how many centuries it may last, God only knows, to whom a thousand years are as one day. This then is our eternity, nor need we think of any thing beyond: it is like the ocean, which we term boundless, because the eye endeavouring to traverse it, loses itself on all sides in undistinguishable air.

But a prospect to be compleat ought to contain some pleasing objects near the eye, which

which cannot dwell perpetually upon an uniform horizon however luminous, without being refreshed from time to time by less distant scenes that can be discerned distinctly. Nor need we want those nearer scenes to keep up our engagement: for the hope of eternity is so far from being incompatible with temporary hopes, that it generates them in a never-failing succession. There is always something to be done for promoting our future interests, some duty to be fulfilled, some good purpose to be driven at, some opportunity to be improved in the exercise of our active powers, or management of our thoughts: and those aims will supply us with a constant series of fresh hopes for the success of our several endeavours. Nor will disappointment cut us short in the prospect; for we may still hope the event will turn out to our benefit, or that we shall find means of making some good use of it. And when danger threatens, we may hope, if not to escape the evil, at least to receive it with such firmness of mind as that it shall not hurt us, but rather work out some unseen advantage.

5. The effects of this hope are not to be looked for in transports and extasies, for nothing violent can continue long; but this hope, designed to afford a durable support, produces a steady, calm serenity, which like the

the equal flow of health, gives life and ease to all our motions: for if it be well formed and strong, it will prove the ruling principle of action, shaping our plan of conduct, and all our inferior aims will branch out from it. We shall consider this world as preparatory to the next, and trust in Providence for having placed every man in the situation best adapted to prepare him for the functions he will have to execute, and the enjoyments he will have to expect hereafter. We shall then survey our powers, the materials and opportunities afforded us for using them, the works we may perform with them; taking direction for our measures from their tendency to promote content and peace of mind, and all other means of happiness, external and internal, among mankind, not forgetting our own enjoyments, wherever they can be had without greater detriment to ensue therefrom: for we are parts of that mankind whose temporal interests are our surest mark to guide us in securing our future hopes. We shall lay out our schemes great and small upon this bottom, setting ourselves resolutely to do important services whenever an opportunity opens; when none offers, turning our hands to any present entertainment of persons near us, or our own innocent amusement.

For our activity will never be useless to us if rightly applied, even in the smallest matters, when nothing better lies within our reach: and as men shall give account for every idle, that is, intemperate word and thought; so every right action, thought and word, however trivial, yet if best suited to the present occasion, shall be placed to the credit of their account. Hence we may gather a constant self-satisfaction in all our motions, our very recreations and pleasures will afford a sincere delight, unmingled with any bitter reflection; our lawful professions, our worldly cares, the daily transactions of life, will not appear loss of time, nor avocations from our principal work. For the same God, being maker of all worlds, visible and invisible, has constructed each in every particular so as to answer the purposes of the rest: therefore we are to esteem nothing trivial and unavailing that befals in his laws of nature and courses of Providence; and may believe, that every right action which the present occasion calls for, is the work we are called upon by God to perform, and though it does not make so large strides as the arduous exercises of virtue, yet advances us something forward towards our final goal.

The like reflection may satisfy us with whatever occurrences or outward accidents happen,

happen wherein we had no hand, for we may trust they have their important uses, which we cannot discern, and are the most apposite that could be chosen for the purposes intended: for all things, even those seemingly the most insignificant, work together for our good. When the sight of disasters or calamities forces us to think of the many dangers and mischiefs incident to human life, we may confide in the mercy of Providence for distributing them where they will fall lightest, and putting each person to that kind of trial which he is best able and best qualified to go through And when evils actually come upon us, we may regard them as our share in the necessary burdens of public service: we know they are but temporary, and may consider ourselves in them as earning some certain unknown profit, or at least that the joy of having supported them manfully will be a near reward to compensate for the present trouble. If it be not in human nature to receive perfect ease under the most pressing evils from the salve of hope, it will at worst assuage the smart, and cast in gleams of soothing comfort at frequent intervals. Thus the efficacy of this virtue extends to all we do, and all we see: it brightens the scenes around us, and fills up our time with interesting engagements, it gives confidence in dan-

ger, inspires vigour in difficult enterprizes, and justifies in trifles and amusements; it sweetens our pleasures, and alleviates our pains.

6. All this, it may be said, exhibits a glorious prospect in contemplation, but how shall we find it practicable to gain so strong and lively a hope as shall work such powerful effects? For passion and human infirmity often surprise us into measures that justly check our hopes, or when best disposed the darkness of our understandings leaves us uncertain what course to steer, and raises suspicions that we may be doing wrong, when most careful to do right; but without confidence in the rectitude of our conduct there can be no ground for hope to stand upon. Now I fear it is but too true, that such vivid hope as above supposed never yet was found among the sons of men; but it is our business to examine things in their perfection, and when we see what excellent fruits they will produce in that state, it will be an encouragement to approach as near thereto as possible, for we shall reap a benefit proportionable to the advance we make.

Hope then has a natural tendency to smooth the ground for itself to walk upon, for it takes off our eye from those little aims and fond desires which stir up the passions obstructing its

its career, and dispels the clouds that make us suspicious of our judgment being faulty. For invincible ignorance and unavoidable mistake are no faults, and may well consist with confidence in the rectitude of our conduct: we become diffident when we mistrust that some secret bias has warped our judgment to determine against evidence, that we have not weighed the point impartially, nor given it the full consideration we might, and ought. But in proportion to the vigour of our hopes, it will abate the causes of that diffidence; for where the treasure is there the heart will be also; and since it is the evil inclinations of the heart that pervert the judgment, whenever that is set right we shall judge fairly upon the lights before us, which how imperfect soever they may be, we shall quickly see what they direct to; and the consciousness of having made the best use of them, without obscuring them by any mists of our own raising, will give us a confidence in the rectitude of our measures, though we may be doubtful of the success.

7. Such then being the natural effects of hope, it will be worth while to cultivate it with all our diligence; but if it stand upon a tottering foundation it will have strength to produce none of them; it may please the fancy

fancy a little in time of ease, but will fail us when we want it most. Wherefore it behoves us to build our hopes upon a solid foundation, which cannot be laid surer than in the full conviction of our reason, upon a fair and careful examination of the grounds and several stages whereon we raise them; for these we are to understand by the golden chain wherewith the goddess holds to her anchor.

I have done mine endeavours in the course of this work towards tracing the links of this golden chain, and shewing their several connections, by the dependence of effects upon causes all derived from one original, by explaining how Freewill takes her turns upon antecedent motives flowing from the same source, by the divine Goodness distributing a far greater proportion of enjoyment than suffering, evidenced in our experience of the world around us, by the Attribute of Equity ensuring to us our full share of the good distributed, by the nature of Justice founded upon expedience for the general good, and by the reasons alleged in support of this life being preparatory to the next. But whether any body shall find this method fit for his use, or think another preferable, it will behove him to satisfy himself well and thoroughly in every step he takes, that he may secure a well-

well-grounded confidence in his determinations, not liable to mistrust and suspicions afterwards.

That this can be done by the force of human reason exerting itself in philosophical disquisitions, remains to be proved by experience of such as shall set themselves strenuously to make the trial; but how good soever their success may be, they will find it impossible to render the whole process whereby they attained it clear and striking to the generality of mankind, who are much better able to pass a judgment upon historical evidence and matters of fact, than upon metaphysical abstractions. A series of supernatural events and revelations for many ages, from the beginning of the world, is evidence of a superintending Providence that cannot fail to work upon the dullest apprehension. The methods taken in the redemption of mankind, the promise of salvation to all who will lay hold of it, can leave no room to doubt of the Divine mercy and goodness. A system of rules and doctrines recorded from the mouths of teachers authentically commissioned from God, remain a certain fund from whence to draw those sentiments of his Nature and Attributes, and those measures of conduct whereon our hopes may be directly founded, without the intervention of long

long reasonings to sustain the fabric. Whoever is sufficiently convinced in his honest judgment that these are the foundations whereon he may securely rest in his hopes, let him inculcate them strongly upon his mind by frequent meditation, and by due practice of the institutions established for that purpose, that his conviction may become an habitual persuasion: for till then it will not cherish him with a constant gleam of hope, nor obtain a steady influence upon his conduct.

And because happiness in the abstract, without idea of any particular enjoyments whereof it may consist, though sufficient to satisfy the judgment, does not touch the affections so much as when figured by sensible images, therefore it may be serviceable to employ some hypothesis to give scope for imagination to expatiate upon. For this purpose what I have suggested before concerning the vehicular state, may serve for such as can fall into the train of thinking there pursued; but for those who can conceive no sense nor activity, unless in a human shape, and a body more than five feet high, the images of thrones, white robes, palms, and chanting perpetual hallelujahs, are ordinarily propounded. Whatever particular scheme of enjoyments a man can think

think of with most consistence and probability in his own conception, will suit him best: for the intent of it is not to prove any thing, but to give a fuller apprehension of what is already proved upon other grounds.

8. This apprehension is the thing that turns our knowledge into Faith, and makes the necessary foundation of Hope: for the contemplation of a desirable object, while there is a suspicion that we cannot attain it, or that it will not be procured for us, can at most amount to a wish, it can never rise to hope. Faith understood in the most comprehensive sense, includes hope: and then only produces the good effects ascribed to it in the last Chapter, of saving, sanctifying, justifying, and enabling us to live a life of righteousness. For it consists in a strong persuasion of the important truths of religion, and a touching sensibility of the benefits expectant therefrom, as has been already observed in § 24 of the same chapter. But very commonly it is used in a more restrained sense, being confined to the persuasion alone, and then the sensibility becomes a distinct virtue, taking the name of hope. This often misleads the zealot to place his dependence upon orthodoxy or mere persuasion: whereas faith in this narrow acceptation will answer no good purpose

purpose effectually; it can neither save, nor sanctify, nor justify, nor be the actuating principle whereby the just shall live, its use lies only in serving for a basis whereon to erect a more beneficial superstructure. Therefore it is necessary to add to our faith the virtue of hope, which may give us a feeling solace in the truths we acknowledge, and urge to the prosecution of those advantages they represent as attainable. For it is hope that draws a present fruition from joys at a distance, and raises a desire to pursue the measures needful for obtaining them. From hence it appears that hope bears as near an affinity as faith to the cordial virtue of Prudence, which consists not so much in extent of knowledge or strength of persuasion, as in a quick sensibility of remote good, giving it the preference before present impulse, enabling us to make use of our knowledge and follow our persuasions. And the same principle constitutes the essence of Fortitude and Temperance, which do not lie in an insensibility of danger or tastelessness of pleasure, nor yet in a speculative judgment of the rectitude and expedience there is in hazarding the one, and foregoing the other; but in a vivid engaging prospect of the advantages to be purchased by undergoing peril, pain, and self-denial. Therefore that faith which removes

moves mountains, and passes undismayed through fiery trials, must be aided and spurred on by a fervent glow of hope, or it could never perform those exploits.

But fear, too, must be founded upon persuasion, for without an apprehension of impending danger there is nothing to be afraid of. Which apprehension is so far from being an ingredient in perfect faith, that in many instances it is mischievous and blameable: an insensibility and hardness of temper against inevitable evils, and such as are prudential, that is, expedient to be undergone for sake of the good consequences redundant from them, is a desirable quality, were it practicable by mortal man, and is mainly productive of Fortitude. Fear is so far only serviceable, as necessary to beget caution, which may awaken our vigilance and stimulate our industry in the prosecution of measures likely to ward off an impending evil. Therefore there is a holy fear strongly recommended in the Gospel, which has its foundation in faith, as springing from a quick apprehension of the dangers of wickedness: and which produces attrition, the first step towards repentance. Yet is this fear never ranked among the theological virtues, as being no more than a succedaneum to supply the deficiency of hope; therefore

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can never be wholly laid aside with safety by us imperfect mortals, in whom there is always more or less of such deficiency; but if our faith could once rise to its full completion, so as to actuate us with a fervent hope, or perpetual appetence of the happiness put into our power to attain, there would be no use for the succedaneum, nor would it be compatible therewith; because carrying always some degree of uneasiness, for in all fear there is torment.

The aim proposed to be attained by Religion is called by two appellations, Salvation and eternal Life, which are most commonly coupled together or used promiscuously as synonymous terms, because if the one be obtained the other will follow of course: yet are they distinct objects, one exhibiting a deliverance from misery, the other an instatement in actual happiness. And the former may be separated in idea from the latter, for annihilation or perpetual sleep would effectually secure a deliverance from misery: so that the Lucretian hypothesis did not want grounds to flatter its votaries with the hopes of salvation, though it afforded no prospect of positive enjoyment, much less of eternal life. But thanks be to God, who has now put into in our power, not barely to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but

but further to inherit the promise of eternal life by a steady trust in the dispensations of his Providence: this then is the brightest side of our prospect, reflecting the most cherishing warmth to ripen our theological virtues. Wherefore it seems an indiscretion in some teachers to dwell too much upon the word Salvation and the wretchedness escaped thereby; for such language chimed incessantly in the ears is apt insensibly to introduce a terror and melancholy over the imagination, by confining it perpetually to the contemplation of dismal objects, and keeping it an utter stranger to those exhilarating ones, which would supply constant fuel to the pleasing flame of hope, and make Religion chearful.

9. Hope and fear, as I have observed before, are the two main springs that actuate human life, and this as well in the exercises of Religion as in our common transactions. Fear is usually employed first, because you have nothing to propose to the carnal man capable of exciting his desires; so you can only rouse him by the terror of mischiefs to ensue if he persists in following the bent of his perverse inclinations: therefore Religion is represented in the light of duty and obligation, and the acts of it as matter of necessity, not of choice. But after the old desires are worn off, when a liking is acquired

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to right action, and a satisfaction expected in the performance of it, there is room then for the spring of hope to play; which having taken good hold on the wheels of action, they will run more smoothly and do their work more effectually than while impelled by fear. Therefore the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but perfect love casteth out fear, and rendereth it needless: for whoever has a hearty desire to do as he ought, has no occasion to think of the consequences that would follow upon omitting it; his liking to the work will carry him through it better than any slavish dread that might hang over him.

Nevertheless it is but too frequent among persons of the strictest piety that they act more upon motives of terror than of hope; they are rather solicitous to escape hell than to gain heaven, and have the miseries of the former oftener in their thought than the joyful prospect of making advances towards the latter: thereby making a grievous burden of Religion, which God has given us for our truest solace, and for a more solid enjoyment than any sensual pleasures can afford. He has declared that his yoke is easy and his burden light; therefore if we find the yoke galling and the burden heavy, we may be sure it is owing to some mistake or mismanagement of our own. But that Religion

ligion has taken this melancholy cast, proceeded from the wicked artifices of designing persons in those ages when it was made an engine of policy and spiritual tyranny: for they well knew, that the more they could terrify makind, the easier they might govern them, and how advantageous it must prove to themselves to exclude all other hopes than such as could be purchased from them for money, or for the most abject submission and implicit obedience.

When our forefathers had rescued themselves from this oppression, still it was not easy to turn men wholly out of their old train of thinking; many injudicious preachers, those especially who pretend to set up a purer form of Religion than the established, strove to affright rather than invite their hearers into it: the terrors of the Lord were displayed in full colours, the doctrine of the straight gate was strongly insisted on, and the gate made straighter than ever the Gospel described it, impracticable heights of devotion required, and religious exercises incompatible with the business of life enjoined as indispensable duties, holiness made to consist in the excessive use of what is only the food to sustain it, and perfection greater than human nature can reach exacted under pain of reprobation. Such strains as these perpetually

petually chimed in the ears often raise great disquietudes in the minds of the serious and well-disposed, making them uneasy in what ought to be their comfort: for because they cannot rise to the fervours of faith and strictness of discipline enjoined, they continually disturb themselves with the thoughts of not being good enough, and therefore still remaining children of perdition.

10. But the saving faith, as described in the last Chapter, consists in right sentiments of God, his Attributes and dealings with mankind, not in a right estimation of our own actions, or a persuasion of their coming up to the terms prescribed in the Gospel: therefore it is a groundless fear that arises in the weakly pious from the want of this persuasion, which is not want of faith. They believe in the power and mercies of God without reserve, and make no doubt he will fulfil his promises to such as perform the conditions annexed to them; if then they should fail of the assurance they have real grounds to entertain of their having performed the conditions of acceptance, this is a misfortune but not a sin, it must necessarily make them uneasy for the present, but does not affect their future interests, nor are they the worse men for thinking themselves bad: to make their case a want of faith, they must

believe

believe they have complied with all the terms enjoined, and yet that they shall be never the better for it, which is a kind of terror they never fall under; so their distrust is not of God, but of themselves and their own performances.

Nevertheless, as such distrust is not only painful but a hinderance to their progress, for a man never does his work so well as with a decent confidence of succeeding, let us endeavour to probe it to the bottom; and in order thereto examine how we are to understand your good people when they complain of not being good enough. If they mean not so good as to render it needless to seek any further improvements in their power, this is a degree of goodness they must never expect to attain; and were it made necessary to salvation, no man could be saved; for there is none that doeth good, so much good as he ought, no not one. The Apostles themselves never pretended to be good enough in this sense: Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and received his heavenly gifts in earthen vessels: Peter thrice denied his Master, and after the effusions of Pentecost was so much in the wrong, that Paul found it necessary to withstand him to the face; and John declares, That if any man say that he hath no sin he deceiveth himself, and the truth

truth is not in him. Therefore no man is so good but that he ought to watch and improve every feasible opportunity of making himself better: nor has just cause of disquietude because there still remains room for making further advances in faith as well as good works, and attaining purer and fuller sentiments than he yet possesses of God and his promises.

If by good enough be understood enough to bring them within reach of the divine acceptance and mercies, let them remember that these are not confined to an unsinning obedience, but extend to all who come to God by a lively faith; which faith is manifested in an habitual disposition and sincere desire to do his Will. But that there are other desires assaulting the mind is no proof of there not being this: temptation and human infirmity may overpower, ignorance or error may overcloud, want of present opportunity may stagnate, but do not destroy it: in these cases it lies dormant, its activity remains suspended, but it is not dead. If we find it awakening in us spontaneously at frequent intervals, prompting to good works as often as a fair occasion opens, perpetually struggling with the enemy, uneasy when mastered, and operating as a principle of action whenever we have the free command of our motions;

motions; we may know there is such a habit subsisting alive within us, and may trust it will find acceptance with the Searcher of hearts.

This life is a warfare, and as such liable to various turns of fortune; we must expect often to be foiled by the enemy, and though we may often overcome, we must never expect an entire conquest; but in war nothing is so dangerous as a sudden panic or a settled despondency; and though vigilance and caution be necessary, courage and confidence are more necessary to support a combatant in the day of trial. Therefore we may turn our fears against themselves, as having most reason to be afraid of being afraid: for terror and trepidation would unstring our nerves, and deprive us of judgment to make our best defences, and the best use of our advantages.

In order to get rid of our fears, it will be helpful to know the sources from whence they spring: one is the indiscretion of teachers and writers of good books, who lay down that as an indispensable duty which is only the proper aim of our endeavours; for these two are very different: he that shoots at a target may aim at the white spot in the middle, without thinking himself undone if he should miss it: so to aim at perfection is certainly commendable, but to attain it can-

not be a duty, because it is impossible. We are taught, Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect; but this is proposed as an object of our sincere wishes, not a rule of our conduct; for surely no man can expect to equal God himself in holiness and rectitude.

The same indiscretion likewise misplaces our aim, by fixing it ultimately upon religious exercises, and acts of high devotion, which are only means of strengthening our habitual disposition of acting rightly in the duties of our station, and our intercourses among one another, of resisting the impulses of passion and inordinate appetite, and of behaving with propriety according to every present occasion in active life; for by our manner of performing these, we may shew our obedience to the Will of Heaven as much as by our mental services, and by these may make proof whether the others have been effectual: whereas by despising rectitude and propriety of conduct in common matters, which yet are duties in their proper season, men lose many opportunities of satisfaction they might receive in pursuit of feasible aims wherein they would acquit themselves well, and fix their eye upon impracticable assiduities and arduous heights of Religion, wherein they must meet with continual disappointment and alarms

alarms at having fallen short of their intention.

Another pernicious mistake of indiscreet zeal lies in teaching men to judge of themselves by comparison; they must be better than other people or they are wicked creatures; they must aspire at Sainship, and become heroes in Religion, or they are nothing. This may be called a spiritual ambition, which always draws after it a spiritual pride, making them censorious, unequitable, turning every thing to the worst side; and so rigid in their notions of righteousness, that they cannot themselves come up to the terms they exact from others; which unavoidably must fill them with vexation and despondency. I would not dissuade any man from aspiring to the highest degrees of virtue he shall find feasible, nor even from heartily wishing to attain greater heights than he can reach; but why may not he do this without thought of surpassing others? I have shewn in the Chapter on Vanity, that there is a material difference between the desire of excellence and the desire of excelling: rectitude of sentiment and action are excellencies in themselves, without reference to what other people think or do, and if our conscience bears us witness that we have a sincere habitual desire of them, what hurt is it to us that thousands beside

beside have the like testimony? There is room in heaven for us all, and we might be glad to persuade ourselves that all without exception shall get thither; but since we cannot find sufficient warrant to believe this, let us stand disposed to make as few exceptions as impartial reason and candour will permit.

Nor shall we fail to find our own account in this procedure; for a man may much easier and more rationally satisfy himself that God is good to multitudes than to a small, select number: his dependence will rest better upon the largeness of divine mercy, than upon his own peculiar merits. Therefore he need not be shy of giving every body their due, as well of commendation for their well-doings, as of excuse and extenuation for their miscarriages, whenever there is room for it: for he will then be entitled to take the same allowances for himself he has used to make for others; his conscience will follow the rule in the Gospel, With that measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again; and he may employ the like style of prayer as taught us there: Father, judge of our trespasses with the same favourable construction as we have judged upon the trespasses of our neighbour.

Thus the three virtues concur in supporting one

one another: Charity which thinketh no evil, strengthens our Faith, enlivens and brightens our Hope: on the contrary, the narrow minded, the spiritually proud, the severe and the rigid, are ever found to abound most largely in misgivings, terrors, and disquietudes for their own safety. Yet a great deal depends upon natural temperament and the state of our bodily humours: there are some in whom you can scarce raise an alarm, and others whom you can never inspire with a cheerful thought, how just reason soever there may be for either; but there are few without their vicissitudes of temper. When the blood runs chill, and the spirits low, there is an uneasiness which, having no apparent cause, is generally mistaken by persons of a serious turn for uneasiness of mind, and gives occasion for groundless suspicions that all is not right there: they are most solicitous then to pass a judgment upon themselves, and the judgment they pass is always unfair and unfavourable. Wherefore it behoves us to observe the mechanical turns of our imagination, and when sensible of them, to reserve our self-examinations for those seasons wherein our judgment is clearest and our understanding most open: and if we make our decisions carefully then, we may preserve a confidence in them afterwards, though we should lose sight

sight of the reasons whereon they were grounded.

11. But fears cannot be banished presently, nor ought they to be let go unless in proportion as there is a better principle springing up to actuate our motions: therefore the best way of casting out fear is by inuring the mind to hope, and making it our business to seek for those sources from whence it may be drawn, which after a little practice, will appear not to be so scarce nor scanty as might have been imagined before making the trial. But it behoves us not to take up our hopes too hastily before we have well satisfied ourselves of their foundations, and settled them thoroughly in our judgment: for if any of them stand upon hollow ground, or appear to totter upon a subsequent review, this will fix such a suspicion upon rest that we shall never be able to place a secure dependance upon them.

The hope of a blessed immortality, if well grounded, is a never-failing source of satisfaction whenever the mind stands in a situation and temper to contemplate it strongly, and throws in many a pleasing reflection at intervals between our worldly engagements. But this is too remote a prospect for mortal eye to feed constantly upon: nor need it, having other supplies from nearer objects lying

lying in the line towards this. Therefore it is a mistaken zeal that would fix our thoughts always upon heaven or heavenly joys, and keep up a perpetual glow of ardency towards them: for they are propounded to us not so much for our present amusement, as for engaging our desire of taking the steps leading to them; and if it be recommendable sometimes to raise a degree of fervour in contemplating them, it is in order to transfer a proportionable warmth to our resolution, sufficient to carry us through the measures requisite to obtain them, and surmount the obstacles lying in the way.

The persuasion of this life being in every part of it preparatory to the next, may satisfy us that there is always something to be done more or less, for advancing our future interests: for there is a right and a wrong in every action how trivial soever, and the acquitting ourselves well in it is a step in our progress, which affords an immediate object for the eye to fix upon. Our knowledge of the divine goodness gives us assurance that the way to happiness lies open to every man, and the paths of it discernible to such as earnestly seek them: therefore if we be heartily desirous of the end, we have a reasonable hope of finding the means; for desire naturally urges to seek, and he that seeketh

seeketh shall find, to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Thus hope generates hope, and our attachment to the ultimate aim is a certain security for success in the intermediate, for success consists in having acted for the best upon every particular occasion, and the desire of so doing will direct to the means of its own gratification.

If we lie sometimes under uncertainty which part to take, we may hope for a speedy issue of our doubts, and that we shall neither determine too hastily nor remain diffident of the determination when made: for the business here is not to decide unerringly, but to make a proper use of the lights we have. Our faculties and means of information come from Providence, which we may be sure has apportioned them to us in such measure as to suffice for our purposes: therefore while following what they clearly point to, we are secure of a solid satisfaction. If difficulties overpower us, there is a pleasure in having struggled with them, which will urge us to hope we may succeed better another time. If conscious of not having done so well as we might, we may reflect that perfection is not attained presently, and may expect that our habitual desire of acting right will strengthen itself by frequent exercise. If we do not discern the expedience of our rules,

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yet we may confide in them that sooner or later we shall feel their good effects. Even when we deny and humble and afflict ourselves, which there is no reason to do unless for sake of some greater good appearing consequential therefrom, either to our own judgment or upon the authority of rules, we may encourage ourselves to proceed by contemplating the prospect of that greater good; when pains and losses and afflictions fall upon us, we may reflect they will have an end, that we shall receive a joy from the degree of fortitude wherewith we have supported them, and may say with Eneas, The time will come when we shall look back upon these scenes with pleasure.

But though we may justly expect great things from our fortitude when hope and practice have nourished it up to some degree of vigour, yet it will become us to avoid the arrogance of the Stoics, who set up their Wise-man in defiance of Heaven, as standing above the reach of fortune: for that being wrapped up in his integrity, he could remain unhurt amid the sorest evils. But it is a vain imagination to think we can ever raise ourselves above the reach of accident, or gain such a firmness of mind as can never be shaken; our dependence must rest upon that

Power

Power whose disposal fortune lies under, and what fortitude we can acquire will serve as being a recommendation to his favour: while we strive to do what we can for ourselves we have a rational ground to trust in his goodness, that he will suffer no evil to befal us, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, or supply us with better strength than we have now belonging to us, that we be able to bear it.

The same Power likewise having placed us in this world assigned to every man his station therein, given us appetites, desires, and necessities, formed us into a composition requiring continual refreshments both of body and mind, we may presume all things were ordered for our benefit: therefore in the business of our profession, the provisions for our accommodation, our compliance with customs, our little intercourses of friendship and civility, our recreations and innocent amusements, provided there be no vicious indulgence, but every thing be done in its proper season without being a hinderance to any more important work, we may hope that what we do will tend to some further profit besides the present engagement. For every moment of time that is not mispent is well spent, and is not lost nor fruitless, how trivially

vially soever employed, provided there were no feasible opportunity at hand for employing it better.

Would your righteous people, instead of striving to work themselves up into continual transports greater than human nature can support, consider the duties of active life; what they owe to the world, to society, to the care of their health, and preservation of their spirits, without which they cannot perform their higher duties with effect and vigour, and lay out their plan of time accordingly; this would furnish them with variety of practicable employments, the prospect of succeeding wherein, would prove a constant succession of under-hopes, branching out from the principal, or at least compatible therewith: and while actuated severally by these inferior hopes, they may be truly said to be doing the Will of God, though they had him not at the time in their thoughts, and would promote their future interests in the gratification of their present desires. For enjoyments rightly pursued, is our proper aim: we are *not* sent here to be miserable, and there wants nothing more than the fixing our desires upon their suitable objects, to reconcile the pleasures of this life with the hopes of another.

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But till we can provide ourselves with a set of hopes, all growing from the principal, to fill up our time and answer all occasions that may happen, it will be necessary to employ fear as a succedaneum to supply the place of such as are wanting; therefore it well deserves our best diligence and contrivance to encrease our stock, that we may have the less need of such a troublesome succedaneum; for when hope and desire urge to the same point that fear would drive at, the latter becomes wholly superfluous. The Apostles, though they preached up the wrath to come, for prevailing with such as could not be worked upon without it, yet for their own use they had not in contemplation the terrors behind them, but the joy that was set before them. And whoever could find means of imitating them, so far as to live always by hope, must lead a happy life: the service of God would to him be perfect freedom, he would think nothing of duty and obligation, but do his work continually out of choice and inclination. Nor would he confine his hopes within his own centre, he would study to make his demeanor not only right but inviting, and communicate his happy temper by sympathy to as many as he could: for soft-handed Hope, whose soothing touch makes the possessor

sessor easy in himself and pleased with all around him, never fails to open the heart for giving a readier admittance to her elder sister Charity.

CHAP. XVII.

CHARITY.

THE last, but not the least in dignity or value, thee everlasting Charity, let me invoke: and well may I style thee everlasting, for thy years are not to be counted, nor of thy Being is there beginning or end. Thou wast with God before the worlds were made, coeval with the Attributes: thy mild persuasions moved him to create; it was they first prompted Infinite Wisdom to contrive, and employed Omnipotence to execute, the glorious universal plan. Thou still inclinest the Almighty Maker to preserve his stupendous work, to uphold the perfect order running throughout the whole, to bless the creatures he has made; and under thine unceasing influence will he proceed throughout all the boundless ages of eternity. Thy younger sisters, Faith and Hope, he gave for solace and direction of mortal men while groveling in this vale of wretchedness and darkness; but

but when admitted to their native Home then, shall Faith be lost in intuition, and Hope be swallowed up in blissful experience: thou alone, immortal Charity, shall enter with us into the heavenly abodes, shall place us in our stations there, and incorporate us into the blessed society.

For thou fillest heaven and earth, pervadest the mighty Whole of Nature, and formest the sinews that knit together all the parts and members in amicable concord. Thy silken cords suffice to hold the most perfect creatures to the throne of Glory; through them they derive their blessings, and by them are drawn to pay their free obedience, for they know not fear, they think not of obligation, but thine impulses are to them instead of laws, to keep them steady in performing the Will of God, and mutually promoting the happiness of each other. From thee proceed their mighty powers; for thou producest perfect union, and union raises weakness into strength.

The earth that holds down heavy bodies in her surface, is but a mass of matter divisible beyond the reach of human comprehension; the Sun, whose potent grasp compresses the wide wandering orbs around him, is but an assemblage of innumerable atoms: it is the united force of imperceptible particles that together

together form that gravitation which fixes the everlasing mountains, binds down the restless ocean within his capacious bed, entangles the unconnected air that it dissipate not in empty space, keeps the Moon constant in her monthly courses, curbs in the huge planetary Worlds and roving Comets that they transgress not the due bounds in their wildest excursions. Yet matter joins in those great works by blind necessity, one general law runs through the component parts of an enormous mass, and compels them to act in concert as one agent: but this law must be administered, and the force whereby it prevails, begun by spiritual substance; for body can only transmit the motion it has received, and is but the channel, not the origin of the impulse it conveys.

Whence then that all-affecting power of the Mundane Soul, which agitates the stupendous whole of universal matter? that ceaseless energy, unfailing source of gravitation, cohesion, and repulsion, which draws remotest bodies to one common centre, which binds the parts of metals in indissoluble compact, which works the wheels of animal and vegetative life, darts the expanse of light around with inconceivable velocity, excites the still swifter vibrations of all-pervading ether, and gives exhaustless vigour and acti-

vity to the lifeless lump. From harmony and union springs this prodigious strength of the Mundane Agent, for the component spirits are singly weak, perhaps scarce able to stir a grain of dust that flies before the wind; it is the efforts of innumerable hosts, uniting in the same design, that suffice for every mighty work of nature. But what cements this perfect union, and makes them act as one individual Agent? What else but unreserved, fervent, unabating Charity? For blind necessity binds them not, impulse cannot affect them, to pain and fear they are utter strangers, and rigorous law holds not her scourges over them: but choice and judicious inclination are the constant springs of their activity.

Their filial love to the almighty Father, perpetual fountain of endless blessings, holds them attentive to observe, and ever ready to fulfil his Will, inspires them with ardor to execute his high behests, and makes them joyful to serve as instruments in carrying on his gracious plan of Nature and of Providence. Their mutual sincere good-will to one another prompts them to communicate their lights throughout the vast society, from whence results their boundless intelligence; and doubles their zeal to assist in preserving that regularity in the material world, which they know requisite to serve the uses and

promote

promote the happiness of the spiritual: nor is their joy abated by the smallness of their several powers, because as large as wanted, and sufficing for their share of concurrence in the most important works: for Charity exults in the smallest good offices, when conscious they were the best that could be done, and were all that the occasion rendered needful.

Their affection for the congenial Spirits immersed in matter, cut off from all communion with the mundane host by surrounding walls of flesh, urges them to attend their wants: they flock by thousands, as occasion requires, to work the springs of animal machinery, to carry on the vegetative process, whereby the earth yields her encrease, to marshal and commix the elements, and prepare for the imprisoned exiles all the accommodations and pleasures they can receive, or the general order established from above will permit: well knowing that whatsoever service they do to one of the least of these their brethren is done to the common Father of heaven and earth, and is an addition to the stock of happiness in the universal family.

By thee then, all-chearing all-sustaining Charity, we may approach the nearest to our elder brethren enthroned above in realms of

bliss and glory: by thee best may we attain some faint resemblance of our Maker; for God is love, and without it the mightiest of his creatures are but nothing. How shall I bring thee down to assimilate earth to heaven? how paint thy features to the sons of men? Art and invention cannot hit thy likeness: to draw thee justly, the pencil must be guided by the heart. Whoso has tasted of thy sweets needs no persuasion to seek after more, nor much pains to acquire more: for thine insinuating graces once admitted improve themselves daily, and to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But thou must first be introduced by prospect of the benefits received from thee, of which there is not wanting plenty to invite the considerate beholder.

Thou strengthenest Faith, for the good man can easiest persuade himself that God is good, and place the firmest, heartiest trust in Providence: but the selfish sees no goodness that does not immediately touch himself. Thou enlargest Hope, for thy candid well-wishing eye discerns enjoyments all around in the remotest and least-valued of our fellow-creatures; thereby beautifying the face of Nature, and discovering wider streams of that bounty whereon our hopes depend. Thou overcomest sluggish indolence, for heartiness

to serve turns labour into pleasure: thou givest joy in performance of the slighest kind office; art the sole lawful means of making another's good our own, because thou alone canst make it ours without dispossessing him. Thou feastest on good wishes when there is room for nothing else, canst rejoice in the prosperities of former ages, distant countries, and rëmotest posterity; canst feed imagination with schemes of beneficial services; canst seek, and readiest find comforts in the distresses and uses in the evils thou beholdest.

When thy well-woven bands unite societies, they act with greater vigour and to better purpose, than private interest, fear, and cob-web law, can make them; and wert thou to prevail throughout mankind, thou wouldest banish war and injury, cozenage, waste, and idleness, vanity and competition, and restore a paradise upon earth. And though thou canst not work thy full effect in single persons amid a selfish world, yet who so could attain thee genuine, undebased by mitakes or weakness, would find he had acted prudently, and how little so ever he might be able to benefit others, had taken the readiest road to his own satisfaction of mind and truest self-interest.

2. For self-interest rightly understood is the

the only solid basis of all our virtues: whatever refined sentiments we may pretend to, they might upon a fair and careful examination be traced to that origin. Self must be acknowledged to lie at the bottom of all we do, and to be the first mover of our activity: human nature is so constituted, and perhaps all created nature, nor can we conceive the highest intelligences to do any thing unless for the benefit or satisfaction found in the deed: for it is the privilege of God alone to act upon pure disinterested bounty without the least addition thereby to his own enjoyment. I have endeavoured in my Chapter on the Passions to explain in what manner our sincerest affections take rise from our wants and pleasures, as the sweetest flowers grow out of the dirty ground: thus the mire of sordid appetite must be the soil wherein to plant them all; but Faith is the stem to bear this choicest blossom, Charity, which will never blow strong and healthy without a persuasion that the interest of our fellow-creatures is our own; and Faith stands most unshaken when growing from the root of solid judgment and rational conviction.

People are apt to say they bear a general good-will to others, because they are taught it as a duty, because they hear it universally applauded, because they should be ashamed to

to want it, and think they have it because they say so: their profession is so far hypocritical that it deceives themselves, or if it does sometimes make a faint effort to bloom in a real affection, it scarce ever produces the fruit of good works, for the least trouble in the performance oppresses it, the slightest cross accident withers it up, or sensual pleasures and engagements blow it quite away. For affection cannot be learned as a lesson, nor performed as a duty, nor infused by shame, neither can it subsist without an opinion of the object affected being beneficial or satisfactory. Therefore it behoves us to examine thoroughly and impartially the grounds of our believing that the good of others is our own, and to settle well the several steps whereby we arrive at that conclusion.

Let us consider calmly and seriously whether very effect, as well in the mind and imagination of sentient creatures as among the operations of matter, must not have its adequate cause, whether our constitution, our vigour of body and mind, or our good fortune, were originally of our own procurement; whether we could undertake to have behaved with the same degree of discretion, sobriety, and rectitude we do, had we been born with distempered bodies or imperfect organs, without sight or hearing, or bred up among

among black-guard boys, or hottentots: therefore, whether our virtue, as well as our other advantages, were not derived to us from external sources. Let us then resolve with ourselves whether all those sources did not flow from one origin, The First Cause; whether we can imagine him to have made any provision of second causes without exact knowledge and particular purpose of all the consequences they would produce: and whether it does not follow from thence, that our condition, both in bodily endowments and mental acquisitions, is precisely such as was allotted us.

These points being established, let us next examine whether there is any reason to believe he has allotted unequal portions of his bounty to his creatures, among whom there is no intrinsic or other difference than what arose from the situation, and circumstances wherein he placed them. That he has power and full authority to deal with them as he pleases we can have no doubt, nor ought we to murmur at receiving less than others, for we have no claim to what we do receive: but what ground is there to suspect he will bestow his favours partially? Men are led to make a difference in their dealings with one another by interest, by expedience, by accidental likings or aversions, by benefit or hurt received, by example,

ple, by humour, by the smallness of their powers, which can reach but to a few; none of which motives can take place with him; and what warrant have we to suppose he will act arbitrarily without a motive, only because he may, and because none can hinder him? From whence it may be concluded, that his kindness extends alike to all in their whole existence, and if it appear to flow unequally in some stages of their Being, the difference will be compensated in others: so that there is one general fund of bounty and happiness throughout the Universe, wherein we all are partners, each having his proportionable interest in the whole, and therefore concerned with whatever tends to make the least increase or diminution of the common stock; and consequently we cannot add to it by doing good; nor take from it by doing hurt, to any fellow-creature, without profiting or endamaging ourselves.

Let us likewise contemplate the nature and aim of Justice, which can be supposed none other than to keep sensitivo-rational Beings steady in the prosecution of their mutual interests: therefore reward or punishment must be annexed to every action and sentiment according as it conduces to promote or obstruct the general good; and it may be expected that whatever good or evil is done to any,

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will rebound upon the head of the doer. But if any finds this chain of reasoning too intricate for him to manage to his satisfaction, let him take the shorter, plainer road of authority; and have recourse to the Sacred Writings: where he will see that loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, are the hinges whereon hang all the law and the prophets; that these are the first and second commandments, to which there is added none other to make a third, for what other precepts are given bear a reference to them, and are virtually contained in them: that we are exhorted to imitate our heavenly Father, who is good and gracious to all, who causeth his sun to shine, and sendeth the rain on the just and unjust: to follow the example of our Redeemer, who went about doing good, preached to publicans and sinners, laid down his life for enemies and rebels; that by giving a cup of cold water, and doing every kind of good offices to our brethren we do a service to God himself; pave the way to everlasting bliss, and work the foundation of all our hopes and expectations; that if we beat and misuse our fellow-servants, we shall ourselves be treated accordingly, and with whatever measure we mete, it shall be measured unto us again.

3. But though the flowers grow out of the dirt,

dirt, whatever of it enters into their composition becomes purified in the passage, and they retain nothing of the foulness in the original from whence they sprung: in like manner Charity, though shooting most vigorously from rational self-love, yet when perfectly formed has no tincture remaining of the parent root; for if we cannot serve another without first thinking of our own advantage or of the Divine command, our service may be prudence, or it may be piety, but it is not charity, nor have we gained this virtue until it can operate in us as a principle of action, without aid of other motive, and we find ourselves prompted instantly to perform good offices, upon the sole consideration of their being such. Our reflection is not large enough to carry constantly in view the remotest consequences of our proceedings, nor the reasons inducing us to enter upon them; nor shall we ever do our work effectually until we take a direct liking to the work abstracted from the wages, and that becomes the object of inclination which was first recommended by reason as prudential.

But we have seen in the proper place, that it is the nature of Translation to throw desire from the end upon the means, which thenceforward become an end capable of exciting an appetite, without prospect of the consequences

quences whereto they lead; and that our habits and most of the desires that occupy human life are of this translated kind. Therefore when we have fully satisfied our Judgment upon the foregoing considerations, that doing good to others is our interest, it will be expedient to inculcate this conclusion frequently upon our minds, and seek opportunities of acting in pursuance of it; for by continual contemplation and practice, we shall quickly get such a habit of kindness as will urge us to a compliance therewith upon every occasion offering, instantaneously, before we have time to reflect that it is our interest; and in proportion to the vigour of this habit, and its ability to overpower laziness, trouble, humour, vanity, and selfish desires, we are possessed more or less of the virtue of Charity.

And we may assist our progress in making the acquisition by means of our particular affections, gradually assimilating our general good-will to the manner of their impulses. I presume there is scarce any among us, who has not some friend, or brother, or wife, or child, or benefactor, or companion whom he can sometimes, when in best humour, take pleasure to oblige, without expecting therein the gratification of any other appetite. Let him then reflect on the motions of his heart upon

upon these occasions, and he may learn from thence how to stand affected, I do not say with the like fervour, but with the like sincerity, towards other of his fellow-creatures: until by often practising this lesson, the pleasure of pleasing in general becomes one of his favourite pleasures, for which he has a sensible relish and habitual propensity. For our natural and accidental conjunctions are the easiest steps by which we may rise to be citizens of the world, and members of that body whereof he, who was the first born of every creature, is the head. And this was figured in the Platonic allegory in the Vision, where Thalassian Venus was made conductress to the Uranian, for she first opened the heart of Psyche, taught her to look beyond herself, and prepared her for reception of the graces of the celestial Goddess.

4. Nevertheless, there is a very material difference between the Virtue and the common run of inclination: the former being really and truly personal, the latter but nominally so. But what leads us to mistake the name for the reality, is the general abuse of the word person, which is often understood of a man's shape and make, but seldom reaches beyond his bodily composition, or his character and qualifications; whereas it has been shewn in former Chapters, that Person properly

properly denotes the spiritual substance, abstracted from all its modes of existence; for these may be and are continually varied; but personality is what makes a man to be himself, can never be divested from him though he were to pass through a thousand metamorphoses, nor is interchangeable with that of any other creature.

Therefore when a young fellow falls in love with a girl, whatever he may fancy, it is not her person he admires, but perhaps her pretty face, her sprightly eyes, her delicate shape, her genteel carriage; or at best her sweetness of temper, her discretion, her understanding and accomplishments. In conjugal affection increased by years, it is the long intimacy, the endearing converse, the union of interests, the partnership of cares and troubles and pleasures that charms the soul. Parental fondness rises from the consideration of being our own blood, the habit of attending to the cares of nurture and education, the hope of seeing the good fruits of our endeavours, the solace and support expected from returns of duty. In a friend we love his sincerity, his honour, his similitude of temper, his capacity to serve or please us, his readiness to join in mutual intercourse of good offices. Thus all our affections fix upon something belonging to the person distinguishable and separable from it,

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some natural endowment or subsequent acquisition, or relationship to ourselves: all which depend upon the structure of the body or mental organization, or situation wherein the object stands with respect to us; and any other person or spiritual substance whatever, placed in the like circumstances, would have engaged us as strongly.

While inclination remains in this state, it is not quite removed from selfishness; for we feel no emotion towards the person without thinking at the same time of some quality or circumstance thereto belonging, apprehended beneficial or agreeable to ourselves. But in time and by degrees affection may grow more refined and purely personal, so as to remain unabated after death has dissolved all connections, and removed the object from us, when it can no longer do us any benefit or pleasure, and after the want of those sweet intercourses we regretted sorely at first is worn off by rolling years.

Were we to suppose Fables realized, and that I should find my Euridice in the body of a bird or a lap-dog, methinks I could take great delight in tending and procuring it all the enjoyments it was capable of receiving, even though it should retain no remembrance or knowledge of me: on the other hand, were I to meet with another person, exactly and undis-

undistinguishably alike both in body and mind, still while I knew it was another, and not individually the same, it would not quite satisfy; but I might still be apt to talk in some such strain as Milton's Adam, Should God create another Eve, and I another rib afford; yet thought of thee would never from my heart. For in my most serious meditations, when contemplating our prospects in futurity, it is an additional solace to hope that she already gathers those fruits of a well-spent life which hang in expectation only to us below: and could I have certain intelligence of that happy situation and manner of passing her time fancied in the Vision, it would be the most joyful news I could receive.

Now to vary the scene, let us suppose a person shewn a child, who he could be assured would twenty years hence be to him a faithful wife or bosom friend, in whose company and conversation he should find great happiness; I imagine his affection would be anticipated, and he would stand disposed to wish well and do benefit to the party, before he could receive any returns therefrom.

Since then such is the nature of the human mind as that it can entertain personal affection upon the remembrance of past, or expectation

pectation of future sources of endearment, why cannot we make this affection more general by a diligent application of the methods we have at hand for introducing it? What though we see nothing in the greater part of our fellow-creatures to engage us at present, we may know that in the worst-formed bodies, and most untoward organizations, there lies an immortal spirit, which we may hope will one day be partaker with ourselves in a state of glory, of consummate intelligence, of noble sentiments, of pure love, of mutual kindness, and exalted happiness.

If there be any now-a-days so whimsical and heterodox as to hold the old exploded doctrine of pre-existence and eternity of creation, he may turn his whimsies to an excellent use by employing them as a foundation of his Charity. The most despicable creatures he sees in the streets, clothed in deformity and nastiness, pent up in narrow conceptions, their ideas gross, their desires sordid, their thoughts groveling, their understanding scarce better than the brutes, overrun with cross-grained humours, untoward dispositions, turbulent and tormenting passions, with fears, and wants, and wishes, regrets and envyings, strifes and animosities, and all diseases of the mind: the most ill-favoured and unfortunately circumstanced of

these objects he may consider did once, perhaps not many years ago, lie together with himself absorbed in the Mundane Soul, in perfect bliss, exalted understanding, enlarged views, and universal love. He may behold in them an old acquaintance, having lived with him for many ages in closer intimacy and intercourse of purer friendship, than the dearest connections here on earth can produce; and though now for a time disjointed, disfigured, rendered unsociable, fallen from their high original, he may sympathize with them as fellow-sufferers, only immersed a little deeper than himself in the jakes of matter, the drain of the Universe: he may cordially wish them well, and stand ready to embrace every opportunity that should offer of rendering their imprisonment more tolerable. Herein imitating the Author of their Being, who only permits the discerption, the fall, and debasement of his spiritual substances, for public services unknown to us; yet forgets them not in their lowest depravations, but remembers mercy in the midst of judgment; and though he may suffer them to incur much severer punishments than any this world experiences, because the exigencies of government require it, he will in due time interpose with his Omnipotence, if he has not already provided natural causes for the purpose, to deliver and reinstate

reinstate them in their primitive purity, happiness and concord whereto they were created.

5. Thus each man, whatever his peculiar notions be, if he has any serious well-digested ones, may find something in them which properly applied, will help to make his affection personal; and when it is so, it becomes genuine Charity, which in its nature must be universal, because every creature, however circumstanced, has a personality and a capacity of receiving good and evil, to be the object of our desire. Therefore the truly charitable man will stand disposed equally to all his fellow-creatures, but the exercises of his benevolence must necessarily be limited and directed by his powers and opportunities; he will employ his endeavours in the service of those near him, not because best entitled thereto, but because in a situation capable of receiving most benefit by him; and if he disregards any, it will not be for want of good will, but for want of skill, or ability to profit them. He will always pursue the greater good, promoting that of the public, or of numbers where he can, and where he cannot, applying himself to study the benefit of any within his reach, by important services, if such offer, or in failure of those, by any plea-

sure or little obliging office the occasion presents.

We are directed to take the pattern of our Charity from our self-love, and taught to love our neighbour, not as we do our child, our brother, or our friend, but as we do ourselves: now we do not love ourselves for being handsome, or wise, or witty, or good tempered, or accomplished, or virtuous, or born in such a place or family, not for any adjunct or circumstance observed in us, but for being ourselves. If we be distempered, deformed, wretched, and involved in crimes, this does not abate our fondness, which rests directly upon the person: and from hence we may learn to bear a like personal regard for others, however circumstanced.

Perhaps it will be said, it is not possible in human nature to affect another in equal degree of fervency with ourselves; I believe it is not, neither is it possible to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, yet both these are among the precepts enjoined us: but they are propounded not as indispensable duties, for nothing above our nature can be such, but as objects of our constant endeavours; and by due application of our endeavours we may attain such a degree of personal good-will to others, as by balancing

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our other desires, shall keep us steady in the course of conduct we were designed to run. For our having Charity does not infer that we must be void of all other desires: if we have that hearty and genuine, we have done well, though it should not so wholly engross our minds as to exclude every motive beside: it will indeed banish selfishness, but selfishness, as has been shewn in a former place, is not the having a regard for ourselves, but having no regard for any thing else. For universal Charity is not incompatible with private Prudence nor particular affection; so far from it that it encourages and furnishes us with rational inducements to cultivate them, as I hope to make appear in the sequel.

6. For the proper object of Charity is the greater good of our fellow-creatures with whom we have intercourse: now let us suppose we were all taken with such a romantic fit of generosity, as utterly to neglect our own pleasures and interests for those of one another, how would the world go on the better for it? Had my Euridice and I undertaken every day to put on one another's clothes, and cram victuals into one another's mouths, regardless of our own wants, I fear we should both have been very aukwardly clothed and fed. Or had I an intimate friend fifty miles off, and out of prodigious affection we should each

each ride away from his own house to take care of the other's estate, we should scarce find matters managed entirely to our satisfaction: we should soon be tired of this extravagance, and agree, for mutual benefit, each to mind his own affairs, and leave the other to himself. There are numberless instances wherein men may know and severally provide for their own occasions, better than they could do for another: and therefore if they were to omit to do so, there would be a grievous loss of happiness among them all.

And the same reason justifies us in running into little societies and partnerships, for our powers being small, the effects of them would be utterly lost, like a handful of salt thrown into a pond, if diffused among too many: whereas by severally confining our services within a compass where they may be felt, they will prove of real value, and the good of the whole will be best promoted. We may likewise remember that we are but sensitivo-rational animals, and neither reason nor personal Charity can do their work so effectually, as when assisted by some mechanical impulse. Therefore it is prudent and highly commendable to cultivate our particular affections, for they will gradually become personal, lead us nearer to a general good-will, and do the work of charity, though by another spring.

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It is better a man should do good to one or a few than nobody, and he will do it more vigorously and effectually where he stands inclined to the party, than he would without such incitement: besides that our own pleasure deserves regard when it does not tend to any thing hurtful, and we shall have more of it in performing the same service for a friend than for a stranger. So that the world is better served upon the whole, and better pleased, by means of our private affections, than it could be without them.

Nor indeed could it be served at all without them, for a man that is void of natural affection never has any humanity, nor concern for his fellow-creatures: he can only be lured to assist them undesignedly by some advantage or private aim that happens to coincide with the public benefit. And since none of us have so perfect an humanity as would invigorate us sufficiently upon all occasions, it will be expedient to encourage such regard to profit, to honour, or credit, or claim to mutual assistance in our own needs, or other schemes and amusements hitting our fancy, as will prompt us the same way. Thus whereas duty has been commonly holden divided between our neighbour and ourselves, each being entitled to a share of our time, and that we may justifiably do many things

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for our own emolument, without reference to him; it now appears that both branches, if rightly laid out, unite in answering the same end.

For while we follow the rules of sound prudence in the conduct of our private concerns, and harbour only innocent and allowable desires, we serve others by serving ourselves, and advance the general good in pursuing our own gratifications. The mechanic who works to raise a competency, the politician who labours to be great, the nobleman who projects a magnificent building or lays out an elegant garden, every man acting suitably and becomingly in his station, contributes something towards the encouragement of industry, the preservation of order, the benefits of society, the accommodations and conveniencies, the entertainments and pleasures of life. If our general plan be well formed upon the solid bottom of reason and judgment, we may follow the impulse of inclination in executing the several parts; for we shall be doing benefit to others at the seasons when we have them least in our thoughts.

7. But if we have a fund of genuine Charity in our bosoms, it will restrain our other inclinations from doing any thing contrary to it; for we are to remember that our services are primarily due to all our fellow-creatures alike,

alike, as being such; and if we may make a difference, it is because some stand near within our reach, or because we can have the aid of some habitual impulse which enables us to act more vigorously in their behalf, than for any others. Therefore we must observe a justice and equitableness in our dealings with all, giving them their due share of our attention, which we may do notwithstanding our particular connections; for the Law is equable to all, its protection extends alike to the nobleman and the cottager; yet the law admits great inequalities of power and property, because necessary for the maintenance of order and government that it should do so. In like manner Charity will incline us to exact justice and equity, but not equality in our conduct; because it is for the benefit of the whole that we should appropriate our services more particularly to some than to the rest.

This then being the rule whereby to try the rectitude of our private affections and allowableness of our schemes, if we have the virtue now under consideration, it will keep us from all immoderate fondness unreasonable partialities, and party attachments, and from fixing our hearts upon any pursuit of profit or pleasure, without reflecting whether the consequences may not prove more detrimental than

than advantageous. For though, as I said before, we shall move most briskly in the prosecution of our schemes by carrying our eye along the line of inclination; yet in the first laying them, and in proper seasons of examining them afterwards, we ought always to take the general good into consideration. But then it will be necessary to consider the general good in all its branches, not, confining our thoughts to any one, overlooking all the rest; for the requisites to happiness are many and various, and it behoves us to contribute towards it in the way that lies open to our passage.

When we speak of the public good we commonly understand thereby, an encrease of wealth and plenty, or territory, or national strength; and the mention of a man's private interests ordinarily conveys the idea of something relative to his fortune or preferment: but though these be advantages deserving our assistance, yet externals alone will not produce happiness. To introduce it among a people there must be liberty, good order, and internal polity, useful arts and sciences, a sociable, helpful disposition, exempt from contentious, revengeful, and encroaching humours: and to make the condition of single persons compleat, we may remember there are two other requisites besides competence,

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to wit, health and peace of mind. Therefore it is our business to survey our powers, opportunities and inclinations, and apply them where they may be most serviceable; aiming at things feasible rather than specious theory, and joining in any good work begun by others; for so we shall do more benefit than by acting singly. So far as our influence extends to the actions of other persons, we are to regard the improvement of their abilities, as well as their indisposition to apply them: for great abilities, with a very faint desire to serve, will do more good in the world than a glowing heartiness without any power to render it effectual.

Not but that it were a desirable thing to inspire all men with the same largeness of heart and genuine Charity we wish to attain ourselves, and we ought to endeavour it with as many as we can; but to make it general is impracticable. A great part of mankind are obliged by their situation to attend solely to making provision for their own necessities, and multitudes have taken up some fond passion or fancy for their ruling principle of action, which they will not lay down: to think of moving them by any other spring, is a vain imagination; but if the spring they move by can be turned to work some good purpose, it is an advantage well worth our attempt

attempt to gain. For the advancement of happiness among our fellow-creatures is our proper aim, and if we can procure any thing to be done towards it, though undesignedly by the doer, it is better than not to be done at all.

Therefore we ought to contrive, so far as the little sphere of our activity reaches, to turn the wants and passions, and even the follies and vices of men to some profitable use; for policy and honest artifice are laudable in a righteous cause. Whatever really improves the public weal, without wounding it in some other part by ill example, or weakening the influence of some salutary rule, serves to be prosecuted by such methods as are feasible: for in this case the end sanctifies the means. But then we must take care to be very sure that our end is honest, and really the same we apprehend it to be: for there are frequent mistakes upon this point. Nothing is more common than for men to cover their proceedings with a pretence of public good, or the service of their neighbour, when in fact they are actuated by some private interest or fancy, though they do not know it: for the heart of man often deceives itself, nor can we always discern our true motives of action, or distinguish them from argument occurring in justification of the deed.

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Therefore it is a dangerous thing to make free with rules or use artifice, until we have maturely weighed all the circumstances of the case, and can assuredly know the principle whereon we proceed.

8. Nor is there less difficulty in distinguishing Charity from weakness than from private views and secret propensities: there is a softness of temper, usually styled good-nature, which renders a man incapable of saying no to any thing; this is as distant from Charity as fondness is from love. I have observed in a former place, that he who can never refuse a favour, can hardly be said ever to do one: for it is wrested from him, not granted: he is driven by the trouble of a refusal, not prompted voluntarily to what he does. I am far from persuading any body to turn a deaf ear against entreaties, or to remain insensible of the wants and desires of other people: but the decision ought always to be made by his own judgment, and what he does should be his own free act, not a compulsion upon him by dint of importunity, moving gestures, earnest and pathetic expressions: he may laudably sympathize with the requester so far as to make his desires his own, but let him remember that his own desires ought to lie under the control of calm and sober reason. But genuine Charity is ever rational and steady,

steady, and though she will employ the passions as her servants, to do her work more effectually, she will never suffer them to become her masters, nor dictate to her what work she shall do.

And though she seeketh not her own, yet will she guard her own against unjust invasions, as knowing it to be a part of the common stock, which it is her principal aim to support. There is a selfishness in mankind which makes them eager to employ and encroach upon others, wherever they can, in prosecution of their own interests or fond fancies, without regard to what hazard or inconvenience they put another to by so doing: as this temper tends greatly to the diminution of happiness among the whole, whatever resists and discourages it, must tend as greatly to the general advantage. Therefore the prepreservation of our just rights, and resolute pursuit of our reasonable claims, in opposition to such as would obstruct us, is so far from being an abatement of our Charity, that it assists in overthrowing her greatest enemy: and what degree of sturdiness we can acquire, to maintain the determinations of our impartial judgment, will enable us to act more steadily and vigorously in her service.

Besides that it is the property of Charity to multiply herself among as many as she can, therefore,

therefore, if we reduce her to such a sickly state as must retard her growth, and deter others from admitting her to strike root in themselves, we shall prove but ill friends either to her interests, or those of the world we live in. Those good people who by a milkiness and too easy pliancy or scrupulous tenderness of temper, judge partially against themselves and lie open to be abused and imposed upon by every body, bring a discredit upon the virtue; making it be looked upon as a folly which one should be ashamed to give into, and furnish an argument to the selfish to justify their practices. How efficacious soever their honest sincerity may prove to obtain reward for themselves, they serve only themselves therein; nor perceive that they act uncharitably by preventing, as far as in them lies, the like disposition, and benefits redounding therefrom from becoming more general.

And the like consideration might keep us from affecting an austerity and strictness of virtue, which would give it a forbidding aspect: if we have any valuable quality belonging to us, we ought to spread it as wide as possible by rendering it amiable and inviting: but when it appears gloomy, laborious, and irksome in the possessor, nobody will be tempted to wish a share in the possession with him;

him; therefore he ought to study ease and chearfulness in his motions, to excite a willingness in others to follow his example.

There is likewise a spice of vanity that often mingles in the exercises of virtue; men are desirous of over-topping others, and would raise an admiration by soaring to heights that nobody else can come near: this attempt the world will look upon as an insult, and set themselves against the man who makes it, and his practices, running down both instead of striving to copy them. Therefore if he were able, still it would be highly impolitic and uncharitable, to exhibit such an object of admiration as should drive another into despair of ever attaining the like: his study ought rather to be how to show virtue practicable, and set an example that may invite and encourage others to follow it; accommodating himself to their occasions, and becoming all things to all men, if by any means he may gain some. For the charitable man is not content to go to heaven alone, while there remains any thing in his power that might draw other travellers to join him company in the journey.

9. Charity in former times was placed solely in giving money to the poor, or to what was called pious uses; but this was an artifice of the Popish clergy, who turned Religion

gion into a trade, and endeavoured to engross all the property of the world to themselves, under the notion of purchasing heaven by paying it into their hands. Relief of the distressed, when prompted by a sentiment of humanity, is certainly an instance of Charity, but to confine the virtue to this single exercise of it, is a gross abuse of the word; for it extends to all kinds of good offices within our power, and all objects within our reach, to the world, to our friends, to the rich as well as the poor, to the conveniencies and enjoyments as well as the necessities of life, to the advancement of happiness as well as the alleviation of misery: therefore, if we suffer the poor to engross more than their share of our attention, we do an injury to others who were entitled to a part of it.

I shall not undertake to ascertain the exact measure to be observed upon this article, which is best left to every man's discretion: let him only pay an equal regard to all the duties of his station, and they will keep one another in just balance. But as the matter has sometimes been managed, alms-giving is so far from being the whole of Charity, that it is no exercise of it at all; and for the possibility of its being none, we have the authority of Saint Paul, who tells us a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet

not have Charity: we cannot suppose the man here specified to give away all his goods upon temporal views, but if he does it out of superstition, or for fear of being rejected at the last day, whether the action be right or no, still it does not proceed from a charitable disposition.

The strict obligation to charitableness, the dreadful consequences of a contrary temper with respect to our future interests, and the crying injustice of detaining from God that part of his gifts which he demands by his substitutes, the poor, are so perpetually insisted upon, that it affrights men into a compliance without any voluntary disposition of their own. This changes the nature of their Charity, turning it into a traffic with Heaven: they do not give, but pay as a debt, or buy off a punishment, and at best think to purchase a seat among the blessed. These inducements are proper and necessary to be urged for bringing men to learn a habit of Charity, who had no spice of it in their character before; for we have seen in the former part of this Chapter that it grows most vigorously out of self-interest; but when once perfectly formed, it can produce its genuine fruits better without them. It is said, the Lord loveth a chearful giver, but no man can move chearfully that acts out of fear or obligation:

ligation: it is compulsion and necessity, not choice and inclination that guides him.

And here it may be remarked in honour of the present age, and as a proof of the improvement rather than degeneracy of the times, that the world is actuated by purer motives than their forefathers: formerly people thought they must lay apart a certain portion of their substance, which they gave to the priest, or got rid of in any manner carelessly, no matter how it was disposed of, so it passed out of their hands; it was a draught upon Saint Peter, which he was obliged to answer: so they gave to others only to serve themselves, and get a remittance of cash into the other world, for their necessary occasions there. But now mankind are careful to make a judicious application of their benefactions, they form into little bodies, they meet, contrive, and consult together how to bestow them for the best: and this they can do upon a sentiment of humanity for their fellow-creatures, without being driven by terrors, without thinking of themselves or their future interests; and if a pleasing reflection occurs afterwards, it is a spontaneous thought, an unexpected reward, not had in contemplation at the time of their earning it. They may esteem what they do a duty, may believe the total omission of it a dangerous offence, and

the due performance meritorious; but these are motives lying dormant in the box, ready to fall with their weight into the scale when needful, yet never having an opportunity of entering it, because genuine benevolence is beforehand with them, operating to action without giving time to any other consideration to present itself.

Where there is such a principle subsisting in the mind, it will ascertain the measure of its own exertions without other guidance. People who are made charitable by the obligation thereto, never know when they have done enough; they are perpetually scrupulous of applying any thing to their own innocent pleasures, or even conveniencies, or compliance with customs, lest it should be a taking from the just rights of the poor: whereas, if they have contracted a real appetite for works of humanity, it will prompt sufficiently of its own accord, it will sometimes carry them through self-denials unreluctantly upon proper occasions, it will settle its own boundaries among their other virtuous habits, and mark out its province better than can be done by rules and precepts; as our appetites of hunger and thirst, when not vitiated by nauseas or unnatural cravings, direct us to the proper quantity in our meals better than any scales or measures.

Thus

Thus it is our business to acquire an openness and benevolence of temper, which will prompt, not to one branch of our duty only, but to all kind of good offices within our reach. Nor need we be disturbed at the smallness of our abilities, nor expect always to perform great services: our powers and opportunities are of the appointment of Providence, who best knows what portion of them is fitting for us; we can only use our industry to improve and apply them, and our industry will be proportionable to the vigour of the principle whereby it is actuated. Therefore it is a work of Charity to be nourishing a sentiment of it in our hearts, though there should be no present opportunity of making it beneficial to any, nor room for exerting it otherwise than by wishing well and rejoicing in the prosperities of others: for though nobody is the better merely for good wishes or sympathizing in their good fortune, yet these things tend remotely to the general profit by storing us with a principle that will quicken our industry, and turn whatever abilities are given us to the best advantage they are capable of, and by helping to spread the like principle among those we converse with.

The slightest good offices have their importance, as they inure the mind to a readiness

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in performing greater works: even expressions of kindness contribute something towards encreasing it, when they are not empty form nor overstrained, but issue spontaneously from a real sentiment of the mind. Politeness is the skin of virtue, but our skin is a part of us, and serves to protect and warm the flesh. And though it be sometimes employed as a covering to vanity and malice, (for many people are polite to show their own breeding, not to please the company, and it is said, the Spaniard often kisses the hands he wishes were cut off,) yet the abuse of it does not prove it to be of no use: for translation will bring that to be heartiness, which was at first no more than a compliance with fashion, and the most civilized nations are observed to be the most humane.

But the benevolent man will have a solid substance under his fair outside, which will not be a covering put on, but growing from the flesh, he will think little of his own credit in his civilities, nor affect to shine foremost in the beau monde: his hearty desire to please will be the spring of his action, and he will only take direction from the forms of the world how to express his sentiments most intelligibly, and exhibit an object most agreeable to the beholder. He will delight to see services done and pleasure given, though he had

had no hand in contributing towards them, will be capable of enjoying the enjoyments of others, and smiling at lucky accidents wherever they befal. Even in his solitary moments he will not be unsociable, and if he can contrive nothing that may prove beneficial, his thoughts will run spontaneously in contemplating the manifold blessings of life; how the distressed have their comforts, the gross and stupid their gratifications, the various conditions and tastes of mankind, their respective conveniencies and accommodations, and what a copious stream of bounty pours down from above upon all corners of the earth.

Nor will his mental eye forbear to stretch sometimes to the invisible regions abounding with hosts of congenial Spirits united in one common interest with the inhabitants of earth, and knowing that one Lord was the contriver and governor of both worlds, he will stand persuaded that the plan of Providence here, bears a reference to that established above, and the occurrencies and transactions passing among us serve for some purposes of superior Beings. This will make room for a pleasing reflection, that the effects of his industry may extend farther than he can trace them; and while he works for the benefit, or even innocent amusement of himself and fellow-creatures

tures within his notice, he may be doing a service or pleasure unknowingly, to many others far beyond his ken. And it will be some consolation in the evils he undergoes, or sees befalling around him, to think they are not wholly unprofitable, but if human nature were better without them, yet are they conducive in some manner to the happiness of other natures, in a much higher degree than they take from that of the sufferers.

Nor can his complacence in good, wherever beheld, suffer him to overlook the lowest part of the creation, but he will find a sensible satisfaction in surveying the various conveniencies and accommodations provided for the brutes, their feedings and resting places, their gratifications of appetite, their pastimes and wanton gambols, which to them afford a sincere and suitable enjoyment: and will lend a candid and willing ear to any probabilities that can be offered of their having a larger portion of existence than vulgarly thought of. For even supposing it could be proved, that they have an individuality and unperishableness together with the two primary properties of perceptivity and activity, and are discerptions too from the general fund of spiritual substance, only imprisoned in closer walls and a little deeper disguised than ourselves, and entitled by the divine equity to a compen-

compensation for the very unequal treatment had among them here; what hurt would the discovery do to us? wherein would it endamage or endanger our future interests? what religious sentiment or moral sense would it weaken in us? Shall our eye then be evil because God is good and equitable to the least favoured of his creatures; or are the treasures of his bounty, think we, so scanty as that we must grudge every portion of it bestowed elsewhere, lest there should not be left enough for us? It is vanity alone that makes us averse to every favourable supposition extended beyond our own class: we are not satisfied with having the care of Providence over us and the hopes of heaven opened to us, unless we may engross them solely to ourselves: we want to be lords of the creation, to look down with contempt upon all our inferiors, and think it a disparagement that they should be capable of ever rising to our own level.

But genuine Charity rejoices in every extension of happiness wherever it can be found or imagined? and had we a competent share of this principle, to cast into the opposite scale for counterpoizing the weight of vanity, a little reflection on the unlimited goodness of God might quickly turn the balance in favour of our younger brethren in animal life. And if we think it inconceivable that

such

such an abject condition as theirs can be the prelude to a more exalted state, let us look back upon ourselves, who we expect shall one day be made Isangelous, equal to the Angels: when we lay sleeping, squalling, and spewing in the cradle, how much more sense and intelligence had we than a puppy? when growing and moulding in the womb, what were we better than a worm? how many thousands of our species pass into the other world directly from those abject states of senseless, helpless infancy, no greater in dignity than the puppy and the worm?

But since it is both fashionable and orthodox to believe death an annihilation to the brutes, and that they were created solely for our uses, without the least regard to any benefit their existence might be of to them, I shall not presume to gainsay, for fear of drawing upon me from all sides those two terrible weapons, Ridicule and Exclamation, which cut down an opponent at once, without leaving him any power of resistance. Yet am I permitted by general consent to allow them sense and feeling, and this is enough to bring them within the verge of Charity; whose extensive compass takes in everything standing in a capacity to receive good and evil; whose influence will withhold us from all wanton cruelties, from hardening into an utter insensibility

insensibility of their complaints, or putting them to unnecessary pains or hardships; and dispose us to take pleasure in doing any thing to render their lives more comfortable, that does not draw us off from our duties to other creatures standing in a nearer relation to us.

Nay, could we be sure they were but Cartesian machines, insensible of pleasure or pain, still it would be prudent to keep the measures of humanity with them for our own sakes: for the habit of Charity may be weakened by acts which do no mischief to the subjects whereon performed. When Fulvia stuck pins into the tongue of Cicero after his head was brought her by the executioner, it was regarded as a flagrant instance of revenge and barbarity, though the lifeless member could receive no hurt from her: and by mangling dead bodies, men may bring themselves into a savage unfeeling temper that will make them dangerous to the living; much more by the practice of cruelty upon creatures that have at least the appearance of suffering thereby. Solomon says the merciful man is merciful to his beast; which implies that by being unmerciful to the beast he will become so to his own kind: for it is our disposition of mind that governs us in our dealings with both, nor is it possible for a man utterly to cast off all tenderness and humanity

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to the inferior animals, without contracting a calousness and obduracy that will cover him fom any impressions by the distresses of his own species.

11. But it will be said there is a necessity to slaughter the animals for our food and other uses, to destroy vermin that would annoy us, to employ the beasts in severe drudgeries in our services, and make them assist in the works of human industry; to bring vice and wickedness in our own species to punishment, to return a proper treatment upon injuries, to hurt and disappoint another in defence of our persons and properties against attacks and impositions, to oppose, contend, and struggle with competitors, to make our best advantages in driving bargains, to annoy the enemies of our country, grieve at their prosperities, and rejoice in whatever befals to their detriment; to espouse the cause of our friends, relations, or coparceners in one common interest in prejudice of strangers, to make a difference in our treatment of persons, according to their capacity to do us good or evil, and according to their ranks, accomplishments, and possessions, rather than their integrity and virtue; to fix our whole attention often upon our own wants and concerns, without thought of what will ensue therefrom to any body else; to exact

painful

painful services and rigorous discipline; to harden our hearts against distresses, cries, and importunities; and when in pain, or under pressing uneasiness, we cannot raise a thought of any thing else: all this might make it seem that universal Charity, and equability of disposition, resulting therefrom, were impracticable, repugnant to human nature, and the circumstances of situation wherein Providence has placed us.

But we should consider that Charity may be had without casting away all other motives beside; for human nature will move by many springs, each whereof may lie unimpaired and vigorous, though not always in actual exercise: and if their workings are repugnant and obstructing to each other, it is for want of good management, which might bring them to act in concert together, and make their motions mutually dependent. For men are apt to take their rules of conduct for so many detached aims, to be pursued severally in their turns; they apprehend that they must be charitable sometimes, and to a certain degree, but too much of it, or to act constantly under its influence, would be pernicious and foolish; they conceive it to stand opposite to Prudence, and have its separate province distinct therefrom; which must necessarily lessen it in their liking, and put them under difficulties what

proportion

proportion of their cares to employ upon either, so as to give one its just due without encroaching upon the other.

But it is the business of Philosophy and Religion to reduce our rules into one regular system, one compact body, all the members whereof mutually support and assist each other; to hang the whole law and the prophets, our particular attachments and prudential measures upon Charity, or the desire of advancing the general good, and not barely to reconcile it therewith, but to deduce our other occasional pursuits therefrom. But what renders this difficult to compass, is, that men have the same mistaken narrow notions of Charity, as they have of happiness: they apprehend happiness to lie in the gratification of every present desire, without regard to the unhappy consequences that may ensue at another time; in like manner they apprehend Charity to respect only the object at present before them, without considering the general interest. Whereas the road to pleasure sometimes lies through labour, pain, and self-denial, we must often fly from it in order to obtain it, and that conduct is most beneficial which will produce the greatest amount of gratification upon the whole. So Charity is distinct from natural affection; the latter in its nature must make a difference of persons and

and stand confined to particular objects, the other is universal and equal to all: and though it will encourage the cultivation of private propensities, because of their tendency to the general good, yet sometimes it directs the other way, because the road to the general good lies through the damage and disappointment of particulars: so that we must sometimes seem to turn our backs upon goodness in order to pursue it effectually; and whenever compassion, compliance, and tenderness would do mischief to more than they profit, it is Charity to break through them.

Now let us consider whether, if no uses were to be made of animals, the condition of men and animals taken jointly would not be endamaged thereby; and whether their being made necessary to our accommodation, is not a direction and warrant from God, whose Charity is pure, unreserved, and equitable to all his creatures, to apply them to our necessities; confirmed therein by his example who has taught them by the constitution of their nature to destroy and prey upon one another; and whatever is done under his warrant and direction we may rest assured is agreeable to goodness and equity, though we should not be able to discern the consistence.

Let us consider whether, if vice and wicked-

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ness were to pass unpunished, it must not abound more among mankind, to the destruction of order and society, to the unsupportable detriment of the honest, and ruin of the innocent, who might be involved in the contagion: whether if the like treatment were given to all kinds of behaviour, the like respect shewn to the cobler as to the nobleman, to the weak as to the powerful; if there were no contention nor competitorship, no attachments of each party to their private interest in making contracts, no zeal for the prosperity of our country, no partiality to little societies and partnerships, no exacting of labour and discipline from the idle and refractory, no application of our whole thoughts to our own wants and distresses upon pressing occasions; whether the business of the world would go on better, the conveniencies and pleasures of life become more plenty, or the evils of it fewer. Hence it appears that in all allowable acts of opposition and selfishness, we are doing the work of Charity, contributing to the general good: and if we keep this reflection in mind, the practice of them will never abate our sentiment of universal good will, which will remain vigorous to withhold us from exercising them, whenever they appear manifestly tending to greater mischief than profit, or are not supported by some

rule that we may trust was founded upon expedience.

The like reflection will preserve us from all revenge, animosity, contempt, insult, and delight in vexing or disappointing, nor suffer us ever to terminate our prospect upon the hurt or displeasure of another, but retain always in view the necessity or indispensable rule obliging us to do it: will bring us nearer to a resemblance of our heavenly Father, who remembereth mercy in the midst of judgment, and never executes judgment but as a means to effect the purposes of goodness: will make us just in our dealings, candid in our interpretations, willing to justify those who oppose us, desirous to find excuses for every conduct, equitable to all, giving the least deserving their due, capable of contending without anger, and opposing without ill-will, retaining a love even for enemies and persecutors, so far as to endeavour and wish them well in all particulars consistent with the interest of our country, or our own self-defence: and in general will place the vexations and disappointments of others in the same light with our own labours and troubles, which we sometimes undergo chearfully upon prudential motives or necessity, never upon choice or inclination, but should always be better

pleased if we could effect our purpose without them.

12. And here I cannot help once more congratulating mankind upon the progress they have made in both branches of Charity, the inclination to good and aversion to evil, beyond that of former times; as they proceed upon more judicious and purer sentiments in their relief of those who want it, so are they more reasonable and humane in their contentions. Wars are waged without hatred, battles fought without rancour and barbarity, laws of war established by general agreement, and measures kept between the greatest enemies: the estates of the conquered are not taken from them, nor their persons made slaves, nor slaughter and extirpation practised in cool blood. Our military men behave as intrepid in the day of danger as those of Alexander or Cæsar, but when the heat of skirmish is over, they treat their prisoners with humanity and the tenderness of a friend; and in such intercourses as the service will permit, they can show a just esteem and civility to persons of the adverse party, as readily as to their compatriots.

Our Religion has gotten rid of that censoriousness, rigour, and exulting at the damnation of reprobates, which were once esteemed characteristics of godliness: but these corruptions

ruptions are now almost wholly drained off upon the Methodists. Men can pursue their own advantages without wishing to distress others, contest without quarrelling, maintain their cause without acrimony, and defend their rights without anger.

Even party zeal does not run the same mischievous lengths as heretofore, it does not break out in tumults to plunder and fire houses, nor produce proscriptions as in the times of Sylla and the Triumvirate, nor assassinations like those of Milo and the eve of St. Bartholomew, nor make an entertainment of malice by drinking to the confusion of others: it makes its last retreat in calumny, defamation, and scurrility, in abusive poems miscalled satires, for the object of true satire is vice and folly, not particular persons, and weekly or occasional squirtings of the press, which are greedily swallowed by the shop-keeper, the mechanic, and the mob, or some few gentlemen who have nothing of the gentleman beside their dress and equipage belonging to them, nor have yet thrown aside the rudeness of the school-boy, and what ill humours they contracted, when children, from the kitchen.

But it is to be presumed the leaders, however they may sometimes encourage these virulences to serve a turn, do not enter into the same sentiments themselves; for they know

know that struggles for power are fair between contending parties, and have no reason to be angry with their competitors for gaining an advantage over them, as being conscious that they should have done the like themselves, could they have found the means of effecting it. And this consideration in an equitable temper, making all allowances for another that one would desire for oneself, may extend so far as utterly to take away resentment and detestation in all cases whatever: for there is no intrinsic difference discoverable in the person or spiritual substance of men, the difference lies in the body or mental organization, according as they were moulded by natural constitution, education, example, company, or circumstances surrounding them. Therefore, when we feel our anger rise at any thing displeasing done by another, we may reflect that we should have done just the same had we been in all respects circumstanced exactly alike: which will convince us that our treatment of them ought to be guided by a view to expedience and necessity, and not by passion.

13. There is still another branch of Charity which must not be omitted, and that is Charity towards God, different in form and appearance only, but not in effect; for we can exert our love of God no otherwise than by doing

doing kindness to his creatures; and both concur jointly to lead us into the same courses of conduct. Our Maker stands above the reach of our kindness, as being incapable of receiving either benefit or pleasure from any thing we can do: if he were an hungred, he would not tell us, for the cattle upon a thousand hills are his; if he wanted the tribute of praise and adoration for his entertainment, he need not seek it from us, for the blessed Spirits in a thousand heavens await his commands: but we are exhorted to make it the business of our lives to serve and please him, solely because what is called his service will render them most valuable to ourselves and beneficial to one another.

The apprehension of doing a service and pleasure to God is very proper to be entertained in the imagination, Religion indeed cannot well subsist without it; it is this gives vigour to our religious exercises, inspires a zeal to carry us through our difficult duties, and arms us with resolution to resist the force of viscious habits, under the notion of their being distasteful and odious to him; but it is very dangerous to let such an opinion catch hold on the judgment. For I have endeavoured to make appear in the proper places, that imagination and understanding are different faculties, the same set of ideas not being

being suitable to both; and that it is many times expedient to take up persuasions occasionally which do not tally with the convictions of our reason. We are but sensitivo-rational creatures, having in our natures a spice of the Angel and of the beast; and the food that is most wholesome and nourishing to the one, is unfit for the other's digestion. In the execution of our resolves, zeal, and ardor, and whatever cast of imagination helps to foment them, will stand us most in stead; but in seasons of deliberation, when we are to lay out our measures and examine their grounds, we cannot be too calm and cool: that our considerate judgment may check the luxuriancies of zeal, and prevent the temporary persuasions necessary to support it from growing into settled opinions.

For when men once begin to think seriously that they can do real service or give actual pleasure or uneasiness to God himself, they mistake the essence of Religion, placing it wholly in externals; which are but necessary expedients to protect and cherish the substance; and because these are styled divine services, imagine they cannot practise them too much, nor too intently esteem them meritorious, and that by their assiduities they shall become prime favourites, persons of consequence with God: which must naturally

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tend to generate spiritual pride, and incline them to despise, censure, and detest their fellow-creatures as his enemies, odious and loathsome in his sight. And it may be observed that those who turn Religion into an engine of craft and ambition, always begin with instilling a notion that God has an interest of his own in certain modes of worship and professions of belief, and that we can serve him therein by resisting, distressing, or destroying opposers.

But the love of God is another kind of affection from that of our brother; it is not a desire of profiting or obliging, or when no important service occurs of making the moments pass more smoothly with him, for there is no matter for such a desire to work upon: it is rather a filial respect and dependence, a looking up to him as our protection and source of our happiness, a taking solace in the contemplation of his almighty Power, his Providence and Goodness. And that we may not want matter for this solace to feed upon, let us reflect from whence all our blessings are derived, whose air we breathe, whose food we eat, whose ground we walk upon, whose creatures we associate amongst, whose workmanship we inhabit, whose instruments we see and hear, and speak, and act, and think with; how many more conveniencies and enjoyments

joyments we have than troubles, how much larger grounds of hope than fear for the future, how many pleasures and comforts abound throughout the visible world around us, and how good reason there is to believe, that whatever sufferings befal will earn a far greater profit in the long run.

Let us then turn the tables, imagining for a while there were no God, and consider what our condition must be upon that supposition; how uncertain, how hopeless, how dismal the prospect: for a prospect of some sort or other will rush upon our thoughts notwithstanding all the sophistry that can be employed to shut it out. Endeavours have been used to shew that sense and intelligence may result from a composition of matter very finely organized, because our sensation and understanding depend upon the condition of our bodily frame, growing and decaying with that, varying from time to time as that varies; but though our sight of objects depends upon the magnitude, form, motion, and superficial texture of bodies before us, and various commixtures of rays reflected from thence, and if the light be withdrawn, we can have no vision at all; nevertheless, all the figures and colours in the world will not produce vision without an eye to behold them. In like manner, though our ideas depend upon the

structure

structure and present state of our mental organization, yet this only exhibits the objects, nor can ever produce an actual perception without a perceptive substance within to discern them: which substance cannot be a compound, nor can perceptively reside unless in an individual. Thus we have an individuality which renders us unperishable, incapable of annihilation by any law of nature dissolving our material composition: but what new objects we shall have to perceive, what smooth or rugged particles we shall adhere to, what organizations Chance or Necessity shall provide for us, remains wholly uncertain: in this lottery, whereon our whole fortune depends, there are millions of blanks to one prize. And even in this life, subject to many formidable evils whose causes we cannot investigate, all will be hazard and casualty, guided by no order nor regard to our interests, nor any rule of apportionment distributing them severally where they may be easiest borne: so that we have nothing but thoughtlessness and insensibility of danger to make us enjoy prosperity securely; and in adversity nothing to comfort us, nor alleviate the pressure with a reflection that even troubles are sent in wisdom and kindness, and will terminate in our profit. Therefore we have reason to rejoice that this is not the case, that our future fate does not depend

depend upon the chances of a lottery; and if I may be allowed the expression, to think it the luckiest thing in the world, that there is a benign intelligent Power by whom all the laws of nature and courses of fortune were established, and that whatever shall become of us when turned out of our present lodging, we can never go beyond the reach of his care and jurisdiction.

14. It has been said that God created all things for his Glory, and he is extremely jealous of it: blasphemy has been always esteemed the most heinous of crimes, and the highest perfection of godliness lies in doing all things for his glory. But let us consider wherein glory consists, not solely in might and power, for they are objects of terror and astonishment as well as of admiration, according to the other qualities joined therewith. It is goodness and beneficence that make power glorious; for, because they, however fervent, can profit nothing when joined with weakness, therefore we admire those abilities which may render them effectual; and though the world has fallen into a custom of admiring greatness in itself, yet when they find it turned to their own damage, it loses ground in their estimation.

Whatever high acclamations may have been lavished upon mighty conquerors, destroyers

stroyers of cities, enslavers of nations, by such as hoped to share in the spoil, or who stand out of their reach, or wish themselves able to do the like; those who are plundered and oppressed by them never join in the panegyric, they may pay a slavish homage t hrugh fear, but cannot honour them in their hearts. Let us consider the common opinion of the Devil, who is believed a Being of prodigious power and cunning, able if he were not restrained from above, to make more havoc and devastation than all the Alexanders and Cæsars, the Saracenical caliphs and Machiavelian cardinals that ever lived: yet is he the general object of abhorrence and detestation, nor do we find ourselves inclined to honour him the more for his matchless strength and piercing discernment: and those Indians who are said to worship him, do it that he may not hurt them, not in reverence and admiration of his more than mortal power and sagacity. Since, then, God has so constituted his creatures, as that they cannot sincerely honour him for power alone, dissociated from goodness; if he were fond of glory, this would urge him to be gracious, that he might receive the ample tribute of praise and hearty adoration. But glory, regarded as an ultimate end, is a selfish principle, doing good to others only accidentally, as a means of procuring

curing gratification to the doer: whereas we cannot imagine any addition of happiness or pleasure redounding to the Almighty from the blessings he bestows; therefore his goodness is pure, wholly disinterested, and the good of the creatures his ultimate point of view in the exercises of it.

But he is jealous of his glory, because lying in the line with goodness, because it is of the utmost importance to his creatures, nor can suffer diminution without detriment to them. For it has been shewn in CHAP. XV. that having just sentiments of God is the true saving Faith, the coming to the Father, which alone can ensure us a solid peace of mind, unite us in the bands of love to one another, make us industrious in promoting the general good, and lead us on the certain road to our future happiness. Thus Charity towards God and towards Man join to draw us into the same course of conduct; we do all things for his glory if we do all things for the benefit of one another, and prosecute no under schemes but what were laid out upon that plan: and as I have observed in the first Chapter of this Volume, our duty to him grows out of our duty to our neighbour and ourselves.

And because the possessing our imagination with an idea of pleasing him, and an awful sense of his Majesty, assist us greatly in

in curbing our inordinate desires, and make us zealous of good works; therefore it behoves us to cultivate those sentiments in ourselves, and propagate them among others. But to make those sentiments effectual to answer their purpose, we must not omit either of the foundations which are the support of glory: to celebrate him in our hymns, the Lord great and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, who only doeth wondrous things, will not suffice, unless we likewise proclaim him the Lord good and gracious, whose mercy is over all his works, who hateth iniquity because it is mischievous to his creatures, who taketh vengeance of the sinner to work his amendment, to stop the progress and prevent the evil effects of sin, who abhorreth the wickedness not the person of the sinner, and remembereth mercy in the midst of judgment.

But hymns and hallelujahs, how aptly soever composed, both in matter and form, are not an ultimate end: they are only useful to beget and strengthen proper sentiments in the mind: therefore we must take care to pursue our religious exercises in such manner and measure as may not interfere with our duties in active life. We may remember that God has said, I will have obedience and not sacrifice; and how he declared as matter of reproach against the Jews, This people honoureth

noureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: so then by doing good to ourselves and one another, with an occasional thought of acting agreeably to the Will of God therein, we offer him the most acceptable sacrifice, and best promote his glory.

It is agreed, both among divines and philosophers, that the road to virtue is rugged and thorny, but leads into a delightful country: while in the thorny way, our passage must be irksome, the dispensations of Providence will seem severe and hard, and what evidences we can collect of the divine goodness will work only a speculative conviction of the understanding: but when gotten into the open plain, and having begun to gather the fruits of our toils, we shall taste and see that God is good, and our theory will become an intimate persuasion of the heart. Therefore if we have any zeal for the divine glory, or desire of possessing our minds with the fullest sense of it, we shall make haste to pluck up those foolish passions and fond desires, which bear the thorns obstructing our passage, and making the way rugged; that we may the sooner attain this intimate persuasion, which will prompt us to give him unfeigned honour, and to love him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

But this love cannot be perfect unless it produce

produce obedience to that other commandment, which is like unto the former, and inseparably connected with it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: for if any man say that he love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and if he says, he has a zeal for the honour of God, but takes no care to bring others likewise to honour him, he deceives himself, and thinks only to make a merit with heaven rather than to advance its interest: Therefore in his very exercises of virtue and piety, he ought to have a regard to his neighbour as well as himself, to make his behaviour exemplary as well as good; so to suit his plan to the usages and conveniencies of life, that virtue may appear practicable, inviting, and amiable, to let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven, which they will not do merely for the greatness of the works, unless performed in such manner as they might wish to imitate them, and if any measures offer that will certainly tend to the benefit of mankind, to suffer no scruples to obstruct him in pursuing them. For honour is greater when given by numbers than by single persons, and if it were possible to procure God to be honoured among multitudes by dishonouring him ourselves, it were for his service to do it.

Saint

Saint Paul wished to become anathema himself, so he could thereby save his brethren the Jews; but this was an impossible case, put only to express the fervour of his zeal.

For the readiest way to make others virtuous is to become so ourselves, that we may draw them by example and sympathy to follow us: on the other hand, we cannot pursue the real benefit of our neighbour in any instance without strengthening our own Charity, and advancing our own interests.

15. The main hinderance obstructing our progress in the love of God arises from the narrowness of our notions: we are ready enough to love those that are good, but very short and imperfect is our idea of goodness, which we conceive to consist in a constant indulgence of our desires. Children are more apt to love servants who humour them in every thing, and persons contributing to their pleasures, than their parents, how well soever convinced of their parental care and judgment: and while we continue such Children as to fix our hearts upon present pleasures, without thought or concern for those at a distance, we cannot love God, nor have we any inducement to do it; for he is indeed not good in our sense of the word, being severe and inexorable to every desire that would do us mischief.

Therefore

Therefore we must learn first to change the state of our desires, inuring them to fix strongly upon distant advantage, and must strive to enlarge our views so as to take in remotest consequences; that we may give every good and evil its just weight in our estimation, whether nearer or afar off. If we could bring desire to take this turn, we should find God indulgent thereto, having provided us many means of innocent pleasure and present gratification, but requiring no self-denial from us that does not tend to our greater enjoyment at some other time. And though there be evils incident to human life from external causes, which we do not see the expedience of, yet are there blessings and comforts enow to overbalance them: so that if we take our view completely and fairly, we shall see so many more luminous spots than dark ones, as to render the whole an exhilarating prospect. This is not difficult to be done in a situation of ease and security: persons living in health, plenty, and pleasure, beholding every thing chearful about them, if they ever think of a disposing Providence at all, must have a very untoward temper of mind not to acknowledge a goodness and bounty therein, notwithstanding some troubles and distresses in places whither they never resort. But when severe pains, afflictions, and crosses fall upon ourselves,

selves, the pressure of them will inevitably contract our prospect within our own compass: it will then be too late to look for marks of goodness in any thing that does not contribute to our immediate relief, nor can we form an idea of it unless from persuasions inculcated strongly in our minds before.

Wherefore it behoves us to provide against a rainy day while the sun shines, and in our seasons of prosperity to lay in such a stock of persuasion as may stand us in stead in time of trial, so intimately rooted in our minds as not to be torn up by the storms of adversity. It is not enough to join in with the general voice, nor abound in professions of the divine goodness, nor stifle every thought that would suggest a doubt: this is only a flattery of God, a covering over the sore and deceiving ourselves, nor will afford us comfort when we want it most. For persuasion is not to be gotten by rote, nor can an inward sentiment be produced by forced expressions, which only give us the credit in our own opinion of believing what we really do not believe: to be hearty and durable it must proceed from a full and impartial conviction of our reason This is best effected when the understanding is clear and the thoughts at ease, when we can look around us calmly and make our judgment not solely upon the circumstances

of

of our present situation: then is our time to settle the true idea of goodness upon such mature and thorough consideration, as that it may abide without changing colours ever afterwards; to observe what marks of it may be gathered from experience, and discern its consistence with some temporary displeasures.

The existence of evil has been the grand stumbling block in all ages; had we fewer blessings, but never any thing to cross or disturb us, we should be content: let us then consider the evils as so many deductions from the good, and if our sources of enjoyment be so copious as that the balance remaining after these deductions be equal in quantity to what would have satisfied us if given alone, why cannot we be satisfied as well with both taken together? For a number of conveniencies and delights, attended with some toil and suffering, are deemed more desirable than a little pleasure that may be had without any trouble at all: as a large estate, subject to taxes, repairs, cares of management, and vexations by bad tenants, appears preferable in the eye of the world to a small annuity constantly paid upon demand.

But we are apt to imagine that Omnipotence might have given us the same blessings without the mixture of evil appendant thereto, or making it the necessary passage to them! this,

this, for aught we know, might have been done in the original constitution of universal nature, which was the work of God in his character of Creator, wherein he stands far above the reach of our faculties, nor is it possible for us to discern what rules or measures it was fit for him to be guided by. We shall do best to take things as they are constituted, to contemplate him in his Person or Character of Governor, ordering all things in perfect wisdom, goodness, and equity, according to their natures and relations established before from everlasting, laying out every event in his plan so as to yield the greatest profit to the whole, and providing that each individual shall share in the good of the whole. Could we once thoroughly convince ourselves of these points upon rational grounds, by the evidences suggested in former parts of this work, or what others may occur to our observation; and could we bring ourselves to a habit of estimating things by the whole line of their consequences, and learn to value an evil productive of much greater good, though we might still fall deficient in our idea of infinite goodness through the imperfection of our conceptions, yet we should have sense and apprehension of goodness enough to be the object of our cordial dependence and unfeigned adoration.

16. We

16. We have seen in § 11, how the contentions and competitions, unavoidable in our transactions with the world, often tend to abate our Charity to one another: and I have endeavoured to point out the remedy for preventing that effect, by deducing our rules of private prudence and self-defence from the general good, and holding that derivation constantly in view when we practise them; which will still leave us inclination to do as many kind offices to the party opposed as are not inconsistent therewith. But there is another abatement made by a false delicacy we too often contract, which gives us a contempt and loathing of persons whose appearance, taste, and manners are very different from our own. If we dislike a man's face, if his dress be shabby, his deportment clownish, his language rude, his ideas gross, or any vicious mixture in his character, we can scarce prevail upon ourselves to wish him any thing good, or think him capable of enjoying a real pleasure, because those he seems to delight in are utterly unsuitable to our relish.

This turn of mind we are not formed with by nature, but drawn into by education as a preservative against catching habits and desires, that would be unbecoming and mischievous: for it being natural to imitate what one likes, and avoid what one abhors, we teach

teach our children an aversion to the manners and sentiments of the vulgar and ignorant, to prevent their being led into the like by their example; and a contempt of the brutes and their ways of living, to take off their attention from sordid and groveling employments or pleasures. Thus we are forced to excite an antipathy, to ward off the pernicious effects of sympathy that might otherwise ensue: for young and unexperienced minds cannot easily make a distinct estimation of the persons and of the practices, nor pick out the good and bad parts in a character, nor discern the force of propriety, which renders the same things bad in one place that were good and commendable in another.

Therefore this method of dealing with them is prudent and necessary, until a better can be taken by gradually showing them the reasons, relations, and differences of things, together with the rudiments and cautions founded thereupon: which though I apprehend possible in theory to be done, and would certainly be preferable, yet cannot be practised by the generality of parents and teachers, who must be left to go by rule, and rote, and custom, because they know none other way to go by. Nevertheless, when we come to some maturity of judgment and reflection, we

we may learn to walk without those go-carts which were necessary to support our infant steps, to be sensible of pleasures which would be none to us, to see the fitness of things in other circumstances of condition, which would be highly pernicious and unbecoming in ours, to weigh the several ingredients of a character apart, and to distinguish between the person and the sentiments or practices, so as to escape the influence of sympathy from the one, without aid of antipathy to the other.

For surely one may see the joy a hog receives by wallowing in the mire, without wishing to roll with him oneself; or contemplate a multitude of flies frisking about and regaling luxuriously upon cow-dung, without either desiring to partake of the repast, or feeling our stomachs turn at the filthiness of their taste; for those appetites are perfections in their natures which would be deprivations in ours, and the materials for gratifying them are valuable blessings to them, though they are troubles and annoyances to us. In like manner we may perceive a real enjoyment in the diversions and coarse merriment of the vulgar, though we find no relish in ourselves for the like; an expedience in their sentiments and manners, which would prove hurtful and unsuitable to us. We may admire the robustness of the porter, the intrepidity and heartiness

heartiness of the common sailor, the hardiness of a house-breaker or poacher capable of enduring all weathers unconcernedly, without wanting to acquire those qualities by the same methods. We may regard vice as a loathsome disease, detestible in itself but not exciting a detestation of the patient; for whom we may still retain a tenderness and what degree of esteem he deserves, while we keep him at a distance for fear of taking the infection: for in almost every character and every form of being, we may find something well worth our purchase if it were to be bought with money, though we should not be willing to exchange conditions upon the whole.

By such observations and reflections we may in time clear ourselves from the remains of the school-boy, a fierceness and strangeness of temper, an aversion and contempt of every thing not exactly suited to our own ways: which while it lasts must make us enequitable, partial in our judgments, incapable of acknowledging any thing good or valuable elsewhere, and consequently indisposed to give God his glory. For a sincere and hearty honour can spring only from the largeness of his bounty; but we shall have no sense of any in the greatest part of the creation appearing wretched and despicable in our eye, where the scene of happiness will stand

confined

confined to a very few of our own acquaintance who happen to hit our taste, as being persons of good humour or good breeding, that have seen the world and are orthodox.

17. Were men apprized how many good fruits are the natural produce of a thorough Charity, they would be more careful to cultivate it, and suffer no delicacy or prejudice of education and custom to stint its growth. It would be surperfluous to expatiate upon the benefits resulting from this principle, if it were to prevail in general among mankind: for they must occur to any one who will deign to bestow a thought upon the subject: there would be no war, nor injury, nor cozenage, nor contention, nor fear, nor suspicion, nor waste, nor idleness, nor perversity, nor fond indulgence; unexperienced innocence would find an easy instruction every where: natural appetite be withholden from warping with a tender gentle hand, and the earth restored to her paradisiacal state. But this is a romantic imagination which we can never expect to see verified in fact; or if it were, Charity would then become not a virtue, nor scarcely a science: for there is no difficulty in knowing how to behave where everybody behaves friendly, and the sweets of such a conduct all around us must raise a pressing appetite and draw us into it whether we will or no.

Therefore

Therefore our business in this state of imperfection and trial lies in learning how to preserve our Charity entire amidst an uncharitable world, to retain our good-will while forced by necessity or prudence to act contrary thereto, to accommodate it to the usages and circumstances about us, and render it feasible in practice rather than plausible in theory. Yet the introduction of an Utopian state may be our aim without being our expectation; and what little approaches we can make in the progress towards it, will be an advantage well worth our gaining. For so far as mutual good-will and communion of interests obtains in any little society, or among a few persons, it creates a mutual trust and confidence, relieves them from the necessity of guarding against encroachments by one another, enables them, by their joint endeavours, to strike out more lights and procure themselves more conveniencies and pleasures, than they could have done singly; and answers all the same purposes, though in a far lower degree, as if it were general throughout the species.

Neither is a sincere Charity unprofitable to a man's self, though it were to meet with no returns in kind: for it enlarges the understanding, purifies the mental eye, and clears the judgment. Most of our errors arise from

a narrow

a narrow partiality to our own interests and humours, we do not see things in the same light when the case is our own as in another's. If my hogs break into my neighbour's corn, it is an accident, and such things ought not to be minded between friends; but if his hogs break into mine, then the case is altered, for he ought to have yoked them, and it is but reasonable that he should pay for his negligence. But to those whom we heartily love, we shall heartily wish well, and judge as favourably in their case as in our own: and if we bore a sincere good-will to our fellow-creatures as such, we should judge equitably upon them all, regarding solely the merits of the cause without respect to the difference of persons; and this would teach us an impartiality and calmness in matters relating to ourselves.

It is commonly said that a stander-by sees more of the game than he that plays, because the passions of the player are interested, which raises an eagerness that blinds his judgment: and for the like reason many people can give better advice than they can follow, for our concern for another proceeds from reason and good nature, passion has no share in it, therefore we can often see clearer into his affairs than we can in our own. If we could inure ourselves to take concern in the evils befall-

ing

ing others, and seek for alleviations and comforts with the same heartiness as for ourselves, we should find them more readily than we could in our own case; because we should not have the pungency of the smart to confuse our ideas, and prevent reflection from taking its full and fair scope: we might then weigh the value of distant good in a just balance, see its desirableness, and acknowledge a present pain eligible that works out a greater advantage: we should be more at leisure and better qualified to examine what benefits may result from a suffering, and be able to find a spice of comfort even in probabilities.

As the mind is more ready to hope well for those to whom we wish well, and quicker in remarking the success of persons in whose enjoyments we can sympathize, we might learn a greater facility in augurating for the best, without that anxiety and dread which seizes us upon just possible dangers hanging over ourselves, and should discern a much more copious flood of the divine bounty than the selfish and narrow-minded can ever conceive. For we can judge more calmly upon hurts we see than those we feel, and in them can acknowledge, that since evils must fall somewhere, it is not harder they should fall where they do, than elsewhere. By practice of this sort, and the habit of sympathizing with the

the good and ill successes of others, we may learn to estimate for ourselves from the manner wherein we have been used to estimate for them; we may be convinced that what was right and equitable for them was the same for us, and what was eligible for them was so to us: which would prevent our murmuring at being called upon to bear our share of the general burden, would give a lively feeling sense of remote good in the midst of present uneasiness, enable us to bear it patiently, help to support us in dangers, and teach us more willingly to undergo the same discipline and wholesome severities we have exacted from others in kindness and sincere regard to their benefit.

Perhaps it may be thought that some enmity, contention, and selfishness is necessary in the world, to find us employment and keep our activity alive; for more than half the business of life lies in guarding against the attacks and encroachments of one another: and it is observable, that when people come into a situation of perfect ease and security, with nothing ever to vex or ruffle them, they quickly rust in idleness. This may be too true, as mankind is constituted, yet does not render it needful for a man to nourish ill humours in his own breast, to make work for himself and neighbours; for there will not want employment

ment of that sort from the unreasonableness of others: be his Charity ever so perfect and diffusive, he will never, with all his endeavours and all the force of example and sympathy, bring an equitable disposition to prevail so generally, but there will still be unruly passions and greediness enough in the world to keep vigilance awake, and prevent activity from stagnating.

Nor need we fear the consequences, if it were possible to make Charity universal: the reason why it does not suffice to fill up our time is because in single persons at best it is imperfect, languid, unenlightened, confined, too feeble to act without aid of some other motive, and often degenerates into weakness: but were it general, it would become manly, judicious, discerning, habitual, and vigorous, engaging of itself, and expert in finding ways of exercising it. For by joining assistance we might improve one another's lights, far beyond what each of us can do singly, so as never to be at a loss how to proceed: and by mutual example and sympathy, we should strengthen our propensity to act for the best, so as never to want an incitement to do what appeared beneficial.

There is industry enough in quantity among mankind to answer all the purposes of life, but the greater part is misemployed in mischief

chief or thrown away upon trifles; and that earnestness of desire which gives vigour to it, is generally derived from custom: a single person cannot so easily raise a liking by his own efforts as multitudes can draw others after them. Therefore were Charity and fellow-feeling to be the prevailing humour in the world, it would become fashionable and engaging to ride as many miles upon a public service as after a stinking fox; to bestow as much pains and contrivance upon the good and pleasure of others, as upon raising a name, or breeding race horses, or procuring curiosities, or pursuing our own fantastic schemes. This would turn industry into its proper channel, where it would not overflow to make waste and do mischief, nor be lost among the barren sands of whimsy; but run all to the uses of mankind, employed in watering and cleansing, to quicken the growth of good works, and clear away those obstructions of fear, impatience, indolence, and indulgence, which disable us from pursuing our real advantages.

Thus whether we consider mankind in general, or societies, or particular persons, the virtues mutually aid, support, and nourish one another: Charity which is built firmest upon Faith and Prudence, improves them again in return, opens wider scenes of the divine benefi-

cence

cence to enlarge our Hope, encourages Fortitude and Temperance, and inspires an equitable temper and impartial justice to all; it eradicates vanity, clears the judgment, perfects discretion, and animates industry; it insures peace of mind with self-satisfaction, and makes us find immediate pleasure in contributing to the general good wherein our own is contained, thus advancing our interests effectually without holding them perpetually in contemplation.

CHAP. XVIII.

OUR NEIGHBOUR.

WHOEVER throws aside his reason, when he takes the Bible in hand, is like to make very little profit thereby: for the written word I conceive, was not designed to supersede the use of reason, but to assist and put it into the right track for arriving at a sound judgment upon things of the utmost importance. This is particularly manifest in that passage, where we are instructed in the duty of Charity towards our Neighbour: which being propounded as one of the two great command-

ments

whereon hang all the law and the prophets, it was asked, But who is my neighbour? Had the mind of the person making this question been clear and open, it would have suggested to him the proper answer, Every fellow-creature to whom I stand in a capacity of doing a kindness; but it seems his judgment had been darkened by some narrow prejudices, which to remove was all that was wanted; therefore the right answer was not dictated as from the chair of authority, but a case put which might naturally lead him to make it for himself. A certain man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among theives, who stripped him of all he had, and left him naked and wounded upon the road: a priest, and afterwards a Levite, coming that way, looked on him and passed by on the other side; but a Samaritan, seeing his distress, alighted, poured oil into his wounds, set him on his own beast, and carried him to the inn, where he provided that all necessary care should be taken of him. Which of these was neighbour to him that fell among thieves? He that shewed mercy to him. Then go thou and do likewise.

Now if we understand this parable literally, and confine ourselves to the direct and primary import of the words, it will teach us that a man becomes neighbour to another by

doing him a service, nor stands in that relation to any to whom he has never been helpful; and the moral of it will be, that we ought to relieve the distressed for our own sakes, in order to become entitled to the offices of a good neighbour from them: an inference which how much it would redound to the honour of the teacher or improvement of the learner, I leave to every man's common sense to determine. But Jesus knew the person he had to deal with would put no such construction upon his words; for his natural lights would shew him that neighbourhood must arise from the situation wherein men stand with respect to one another, not from their manner of conducting themselves therein; and is correlative, so that no man can be neighbour to another without the other being likewise neighbour to him. Therefore the wounded traveller, by the circumstance of his distress, was really placed in as near a degree of neighbourhood to the priest and the Levite as the Samaritan, though the latter only approved himself a neighbour by acting agreeably to that character, and was therefore proposed as a pattern for any who desire to fulfil the duties of good neighbourhood.

And the case of a Jew and a Samaritan was chosen to shew the relation the more

compre-

comprehensive, for the Samaritans were regarded as schismatics, they had set up mount Gerizzim for the place where God's name was to be worshipped in opposition to Sion, therefore there was as much hatred and detestation between them and the Jews, as religious feuds can inspire. I hope we can find nothing similar in our own times to illustrate by, but must take our idea from history, and may imagine their animosity as great as between a Jesuit and a Hugonot, a high Churchman and a Presbyterian of the last century. If then a Samaritan, a schismatic, a fanatical dog, an open enemy to God and his true Church, nevertheless be neighbour to an orthodox Jew when in want of each other's assistance, surely the same relation must subsist between every two human creatures upon earth in the like situation.

2. The term neighbour was the properest to distinguish the object of our good offices, because it arises from situation, not from personal character: a brother must always continue such wherever he goes, nor is it possible for any one who was not born of the same parents, to become a brother afterwards; but there is a possibility that any person however remote, may come to live at the next door. Therefore our Charity must be universal, our disposition and good-will extend alike to all,

because else there might be some who could never come into a situation entitling them to receive the effects of it, and we might possibly have a neighbour to whom we should owe no duties of good neighbourhood: but our immediate attention and exercises of Charity must stand confined by our opportunities, for where we can do no service, there and there only we owe none, yet we may still retain a good will though without power of rendering it effectual.

And here it will not be foreign to my principal design, that of harmonizing Reason and Revelation, to observe how well this doctrine tallies with that deduced by the light of nature in the two former Volumes, and explained in the first Chapter of this, where it appears that we are citizens of the universe, interested in all the good and evil befalling therein; therefore our good wishes are primarily due to the whole, and our first aim ought to be placed upon advancing the general stock of happiness. But we are too inconsiderable creatures to do any thing for general service: our powers are small, our activity confined by time and place within a very narrow compass, which obliges us to contract our aim to points that we can reach. For since the good of the whole is made up of the aggregate of good among individuals, we shall contribute towards

towards the one by every little addition we can make to the other: from whence it follows, that every perceptive creature, as being fellow-citizen of the same Universe, that falls within the sphere of our good offices, or in Scripture language becomes our neighbour, is the proper object of our endeavours.

But small as our powers are, they may affect more than one person, nor is neighbourhood so confined as to include none but him that lives at the next door; since then we may have several neighbours at the same time, we must not be so intent upon our duties to one, as to overlook all the rest. If my neighbour desires me to join with him in a concert of French horns, were I able I should be willing to oblige him; but if I knew the noise would disturb the whole street, it were more neighbourly upon the whole to refuse him: or if he would project a building over my ground, that must prove an annoyance to others, I shall be a bad neighbour if I do not oppose him.

Neither does our duty to our neighbour exclude all regard to our own interest, but puts both upon an equal footing; for we are members of that neighbourhood whose interests we are to cultivate, parts of that Whole whose advantages we are to pursue: we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves,

selves, not better than ourselves, nor solely, so as to reserve none for our own use. Hence, as observed in the Chapter above cited, the general rule parts into two main branches, Prudence and Benevolence, called in sacred style the wisdom of the serpent and innocence of the dove: the former prompts to hinder another from encroaching upon our share of happiness, the other withholds us from making encroachments upon his, for an encroachment on either side diminishes the common stock alike. Therefore in our dealings with another, we are to regard his good indifferently with our own, and take the course that will yield most of it to either; and in our transactions affecting several, we are to pursue those measures from whence the greater profit will redound upon the balance among the whole.

3. This it is which justifies all allowable contentions, oppositions, punishments, and severities, and recommends all laudable self-denials: for though these things are unneighbourly or unnatural, if we consider only their present effect upon the party suffering by them, yet we must remember that the public and other persons, besides those with whom we have immediate intercourse, are our neighbours whenever their interests will be affected by what we do; and we ourselves each of us make

make one of the neighbourhood, which will be advantaged by a trouble or inconvenience brought upon any part of it for the greater benefit of the whole, or of any other part. Yet still the neighbourhood is not dissolved between us and any whom we find just cause to afflict, but is overpowered by the stronger obligation of doing a greater good to some other parts of the neighbourhood; the force of it subsists entire notwithstanding the contrary attraction, as the force of gravitation continues to act upon a plummet though you pull upwards with a string, and will draw it down again the moment you let go your hand: so that competitors, enemies, and persecutors do not cease to be our neighbours, but remain entitled to the benefit of that relation at intervals whenever our duty to others who stand in as near relation, will permit.

Nor is it necessary in every case of contention and severity, to have an immediate discernment of the benefits resulting therefrom: for it may be justified by rules prevailing among mankind, which carry a presumption of having been founded upon a necessity or expedience we may not be able to discern: but then to give them that presumption, they must be rules of judgment and sobriety, not of passion or arbitrary custom, and taken upon authority of the discreet

creet and intelligent, not of the giddy and the impetuous.

But if a neighbourhood be so large as that there can be little intercourse among them all, it is convenient for the benefit of all to distribute into little clans, among whom there may be a closer attachment, and more continual commerce of good offices: in forming of which under societies, they will have respect to characters, qualifications, old acquaintance, convenience of situation, and other circumstances, rendering them more apt to join together for mutual emolument or pleasure. And if it be proper for some one or more of them to take order in matters of general concern, each will give him all the assistance and deference requisite for the better performance of his charge.

For we ought never to forget that we are sensitivo-rational animals, governed partly by appetite, habit, custom, appearance, and all the family of imagination, and but partly by reason; nor can the latter faculty work her purposes half so effectually as when aided by the other. Were each man to attach himself to the services of a stranger, one of different manners and character, whom he had no other inducement to oblige than being a fellow-creature, he could not proceed with the same vigour and heartiness as when prompted

prompted by natural affection, inclination, mutual convenience, or general custom, and approbation.

Nor could he join so industriously under those who have the care of public services, upon the single view of their being public services, without a due respect for authority and sense of obligation to stimulate him. So that there would be fewer benefits done and received among mankind, and good neighbourhood must suffer, if we were to depend upon reason alone and not press the inferior powers of our nature into her service: but the inferior powers will not always come upon call, therefore we must employ them when they are to be had, and put reason upon such work wherein she may have the benefit of their services.

Thus the duties of particular relations, connections, and stations, grow out of a due regard to good neighbourhood, because it will be best promoted by paying a just attention to them. Hence it follows that, whenever things are so circumstanced as that the prosecution of those duties would manifestly carry us contrary to the general good, they are superseded, and we must hate father and mother, wife and children, in comparison of that universal body whereof we are members; but whenever this case does not happen, as it

it very rarely does happen, every one is our nearest neighbour, in proportion as we stand best qualified and situated, as well with respect to our inward disposition and powers, as to common opinions and usages, to serve him most effectually and heartily: and when equal benefits come into competition, the nearer neighbour always deserves preference before the more remote.

4. Therefore it is an unjust cavil that has been raised against the Gospel by some who pretend that it does not inculcate all the moral duties, because it has omitted to give any precepts upon Friendship. For we have just now seen that love to the neighbourhood will incline us to encourage those affections which may give a spring to our endeavours in acts of kindness, and the more ties wherewith we are obligated to any, the nearer he stands in proximity to us: so that it is impossible for any man, who is truly charitable or a good neighbour, in the Scripture sense of the terms, even to prove a treacherous, an uncertain, or a bad friend, because all social duties are implied and virtually contained in that general precept called the second great commandment. But so it may be said likewise that he, who fulfils this commandment, cannot possibly be a bad husband, or a bad father, or son, or master, or servant, or subject;

ject; nevertheless, it was found necessary to give particular injunctions for all those stations: was it not then an oversight that the duties of friendship were omitted?

To this may be answered, that other connections are general, taking place among the vulgar, the ignorant, the selfish, the perverse, and persons of all denominations and characters: they are cast upon us by nature, or entered into for necessity or convenience, and men would be tempted continually to violate them if not restrained by rules and injunctions. But true friendship subsists only among a few persons of good character and refined sentiments, which will direct them sufficiently how to perform the functions of it: it is a tie of choice, not of nature or situation, and the exercises of it flow spontaneously from the relish found in them; so there is no occasion to drive him that will lead, for precept and obligation are wholly superfluous in matters whereto the heart is prompted by inclination; they could have none other effect than to make a task and burden of that which was a pleasure before. It is true, a friend ought to stand ranked among the nearest of our neighbours; but this consideration serves only to justify our particular attachment to him, and our giving scope

scope to the impulses of friendship to take their natural effect upon our actions.

But it will be asked, have there not been fickle, unfaithful friends? are they not blemishes in society, deserving a caution and direction to prevent others from following their example? I grant there are frequent misbehaviours in those common connections and intimacies which the world dignifies with the name of friendship: and so are there frequent infidelities, dissimulations, and inconstancies, amongst lovers; yet I never heard it objected against the Gospel, that there are no rules of duty laid down for our conduct in courtship. For affection and passion require rules of restraint, more than those for keeping up their fervour without abatement: had particular injunctions been given for this purpose, they could not have been so clearly framed, as not to be perpetually misunderstood, and do more hurt in the world than benefit.

What multitudes of novels are spread abroad, all aiming to inculcate the indispensable duty of constancy? and what effect have they had upon the minds of the boys and girls who study them? Constancy is certainly a virtue and a praise; but what is constancy in their apprehension? nothing but an

an inflexible obstinacy of attachment to whatever happens to hit their fancy, against all reason, and prudence, and advice. How much more impenetrably would they be armed against remonstrances by the sanction of Religion, had it been written, And thou shalt be constant in love, for this is the third great commandment like unto the two former. But the Gospel has strongly inculcated the duties of honesty, sincerity, and fidelity in our dealings, of equitableness in our thoughts, and words, and actions, or practising the golden rule to do as we would be done by, to weigh the pleasures, the rights, and advantages, the disappointments, vexations, and damage of others in the same balance wherein we would weigh our own: and our own reason and common sense, if we consult them, will instruct us how to apply those general rules to particular cases in love or friendship, without overlooking our other duties to the world, to our parents, to our children yet unborn, to our other neighbours, and to ourselves.

If friendship had been made a duty, the world might still have remained liable to gross mistakes concerning the thing which is the object of that duty: for where shall we find an exact and steady definition of friendship? the learned have been greatly divided upon

upon this head, some having laid down rules for our conduct therein which others have condemned. Nor is this to be wondered at, for indeed there are very various sorts and degrees of friendship, so that the same rules cannot be applicable to all, but what are proper cautions in one, would be justly blameable in another: particularly that ascribed to bias, which directs us to behave with a friend, as if we knew he would one day become an enemy.

Were there any determinate fixed idea of friendship, we might expect to find it in Cicero's treatise upon that subject, entitled Lœlius: but how vague, how desultory, how fluctuating are his notions! First he tells you, upon the authority of the Philosophers, that friendship can subsist only among the good, but none is good except the perfect Wise-man, an ideal character, which never really existed upon earth. This he thinks too strict and rigid, therefore by good or wise would have such understood whose lives have been exemplary for fidelity, integrity, equity, and generosity, exempt from all tincture of greediness, inordinate desire, or intemperance of passion, uniform and steady in their conduct, like Fabricius, Curius, and Caruncanius: and explains friendship to be nothing else than a perfect harmony of sentiment, as well with respect

respect to religious matters as those relating to human life. It is easy to see into what narrow compass this description both of the subjects and essence of friendship, must contract it: and accordingly he takes notice that in history one can scarce pick out three or four pair of true friends, to which he hopes in future times Scipio and Lœlius will be added for another. Nor can it escape our observation, of how little use it would be to mankind to enjoin a virtue which can take place in so few instances, and which persons of the character above described will run into of their own accord, without direction or exhortation.

Nevertheless, in other places of the same treatise he changes his note representing friendship as a common and easy thing: so common as to be found every where, and so easy as to be understood and admired by everybody. For, says he, friendship is the only thing in human life whose value all join with one voice in acknowledging: virtue has been run down by many as mere arrogance and ostentation; many despise riches, as believing contentment better had with a little; honours which set the desires of some in a flame, are by many accounted nothing but bubble and emptiness; in like manner, whatever other things have their respective admirers, appear wholly worthless in the eyes of multitudes.

But

But upon friendship all men unite in the same opinion: those who apply their thoughts to public affairs, those who delight in the secrets of nature and treasures of learning, those who attend only to the management of their private concerns, even those who make pleasure their sole study; all agree that there is no living without friendship, if one wishes to have any enjoyment of life. For friendship somehow finds means to insinuate itself into the characters of all men, nor will suffer any scheme of life to be carried on without it. Nay, if there be any of so morose and savage a temper as to resemble Timon of Athens, the man-hater, yet such a one could not bear to be without a friend, in whose bosom he might disburden his spleen.

After this changeable description given by the most accurate and eloquent hand, we may guess what idea the generality must entertain of friendship: and indeed if we observe the common discourses of mankind, we shall find a friend to be one we frequently visit, who is our boon companion, or joins with us in our pleasures and diversions, or encourages us in our business, or unites in the same scheme, or votes the same way at an election, or is our patron or dependent, who we hope will help us in rising to preferment or increasing our interest. Such attachments

are

are apt to grow but too violent of themselves, making men partial, passionate, unjust to others who are not their friends, and regardless of the commonweal, or of what mischief they do in their zeal for those they favour, and need curbing rather than encouraging by the sanction of a lawgiver. Lœlius himself acknowledges the evils of them, and produces a flagrant instance which happened within his own knowledge; for in a court of judicature, where he sat upon the bench, one Blosius was examined as having been an accomplice with Tiberius Gracchus in some seditious practices: the man pleaded in justification, that he had so great a veneration for Gracchus, he thought himself bound to do any thing he desired. What! says the judge, if he had bid you fire the Capitol, would you have done it? Yes, replied he, I should have believed it my duty.

Thus we see to what lengths of frenzy the duty of fidelity to a friend, preached up incessantly among the Romans, could carry a man: but what if Blosius had been a zealous Christian, and had found it recorded that Jesus, upon one asking him, What shall I do to be saved, had answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself; thou shalt be constant in love, and true to thy friend; for these are

the four great commandments whereon hang all the law and the prophets. This would have brought religious zeal to join in with partiality to his friend, and prepared him to suffer martyrdom in the cause of party and faction.

But ought we not then to be true to our friend? assuredly: common honour and common sense, if we have any, will prompt us to a fidelity, an obligingness, a warmth in his interests, according to the nature and degree of the friendship; but the written word was not given to instruct us in matters that reason can so easily discern by her own lights. Therefore we have cause to be thankful that our teacher has been silent upon this article, because his authority was not wanted for such as would be disposed to obey it, and would have been perverted to mischievous purposes by the violent and unwary.

CHAP. XIX.

DIVINE ECONOMY.

HAVING found, both from Religion and Philosophy, that universal Charity towards God and his creatures is the grand Cardinal virtue, the hinge whereon all the others turn, the

the end wherein they ought to terminate, let us endeavour to trace out some footsteps of the divine economy in the administration of this world: wherein it may appear by what gradual approaches God has been pleased to lead mankind towards a sound understanding of himself, and an openness of heart to one another. And this will oblige us to re-handle a subject we have already taken into consideration before: for Providence, I must own, is a favourite topic with me, and I am fond of setting it in every various light that may help to make it more clearly and more generally understood.

In my XXVth Chapter of the fourth Volume bearing that title, I have taken pains to shew that all events without exception, small as well as great, must take rise from their adequate causes, provided in certain knowledge and purpose of every particular effect they should bring forth. This being an esoteric doctrine, inconvenient and unfit for common use, which requires a distinction to be made between things providential, and others that are not, I have appropriated the VIth Chapter of the fifth Volume, mark out that distinction, and render the wisdom and contrivance running throughout the works of nature apparent to common apprehensions. But here still remains another field of en-

quiry, into the scheme of polity governing mankind, and measures of conduct respecting the moral world, wherein we may take our ideas directly from experience, without making other use of speculation than to direct and model our observations into a regular plan. This may be called not so much a theory as a history of Providence: of which I purpose in this Chapter to attempt an imperfect sketch. I say sketch, for a compleat history would require uncommon abilities, an extensive knowledge of the world in all ages and countries, and a piercing sagacity to follow the lines of Wisdom throughout all their intricate windings.

But it is the custom of Providence to perfect mighty works by a multitude of weak and unpromising instruments, each performing a small and several part of the whole: for we are none of us wholly insignificant when doing our best, because that best is always the whole of our share towards compleating the great design. Therefore I may safely presume that my talents are sufficient for the sphere I am to act in: it is my business to fill up the sphere, that there may be no vacancies left through my negligence; and if I can make my drawings visible, with something of a shape, connection, and symmetry in them, shall think I have done great matters.

matters. Perhaps the coarse draught may stimulate and furnish hints to some abler master to produce a fuller, more striking likeness of the glorious original, which may gain the admiration of everybody, and do more extensive service than I am capable of. In these hopes I shall enter upon my undertaking without diffidence, as liable to no hazard of a disappointment, because having no expectations, and being assured that the Disposer of gifts has enabled every man to do as much as was wanted from him on every present occasion.

2. When we reflect on the boundless extent of Omnipotence, having all substances at command, and all manners of affecting them, there is no doubt that God might have distributed what portion and kinds of happiness he thought proper to his creatures, without making any preparation of subjects or materials to bring them suitable to one another: nor that he might have excited sensations, ideas, and intelligence, either permanent, unfading, and unsatiating, or in continually varying successions, by his own immediate act, without employing any material or other channel to convey them. But experience of all around us testifies, that he has chosen to work his purposes by the contrivances of wisdom rather than the operations of power.

He

He could have rained us food from heaven, ready fitted for our palate and digestion; but he has given fertility to the earth, skill and industry to man to draw from thence by long toil and patience the corn and other provisions for our sustenance. He could have moulded the human frame at once from the dust of the earth in full stature and maturity, with sufficient knowledge to name all the beasts of the field according to their respective natures; but he has cast us into the world in helpless infancy, growing through many stages of imbecility and ignorance up to perfect manhood. In like manner he could have fully peopled the earth, as easily as make an Adam, by a single act of creation; inspired into them arts and sciences, good polity, judgment, experience, and sound Religion, together with the breath of life; but we may learn from ancient records, that there has been an infancy of the world as well as of particular persons, a gradual progress of knowledge human and divine; and though we have not yet seen it arrive to full maturity, we may discern it approaching slowly thereto, by the advancement of learning applied to useful purposes; the daily decrease of savageness, barbarism, and superstition, the spreading intercourse among nations, familiarizing them with one another, and the growing

growing sinews of commerce tending to knit the whole into one body, and compleat the perfect manhood of a paradisiacal state.

3. We were born into the world selfish and sensitive, having no regard for any other creatures, nor for any thing beyond the present calls of appetite: and if we had been planted like trees always to grow each in his several spot, receiving our nourishment from the ground beneath us, our pleasures and pains continually from the sun, the air, the rains, and the dews, we should never have had a thought reaching further than ourselves, or than the present moment. But God has been pleased to endue us with remembrance and observation to discern the influence of the past upon the present, and the present upon the future; which leads us gradually into a degree of forecast, prudence, and reason. He has likewise given us the powers of motion and organs of speech, by which we may have intercourse among one another; and has sown the seeds of wants and desires, whereby we are drawn to become mutually helpful for supplying the one and gratifying the other. This first opens the heart a little beyond itself and begins our concern for others, generating love, instinct, and friendship: for I have shown in the Chapter on the Passions, that those affections are the products

products of wisdom, not the gifts of power, being no more born with us than speech; but our organs are so constituted and suited to receive the actions of external objects as to lead us naturally into them, without any more need of pains and cultivation than to hasten their growth.

He has given us moreover the faculty of imagination, which when stored with variety of associations and trains, can furnish an entertainment of its own from objects that do not touch the sensitive appetites; and as we grow up, can find employment for more of our time than they do; for hunger and thirst and the pleasures of sensation engage us only now and then, but habit, fancy, amusement, curiosity, novelty, and other movements of imagination, occupy the most of our hours. This renders us sociable, and makes us taste an immediate pleasure in company, where we do not expect assistance in our wants and desires: for the trains of thought in other persons bearing a similitude with our own, their conversation and motions attract us by sympathy, and lead our imagination more easily and in greater variety of windings than the scenes of inanimate objects around us can do. Were a child to be kept always alone from its birth, it would never want company, because having never experienced the pleasures of it; but if one of

of us was shut up by himself for a while, he would grow melancholy and dull, his spirits languid, and his thoughts stagnating; and if he could only see a number of people from his window, among whom there appeared something of business and bustle going forward, it would give a lift to his spirits and briskness to his ideas. Therefore we are not born sociable creatures, nor have an innate propensity to converse of any kind; but are placed in such circumstances by nature, and endued with such capacities as will lead us into it insensibly.

4. But imagination is more strongly affected with scenes expressive of passion and emotion, than those that are calm and placid: this I take it is what makes boys generally unlucky, and those of the sprightliest temper are commonly fullest of mischief; because being unable to bear the sight of every thing languid around them, they can raise more stir by vexing than by doing service. Therefore their mischief is not malice, but fondness for something that may engage their attention; for when they first meet together they are pleased with one another's company, but not having learned the art of keeping up their pleasures of conversation, they begin to play unlucky tricks with each other meerly for want of better employment: and for the like

like reason they throw stones at people, because they can put them thereby into a greater flutter than by any thing else they could do. Or if they have not an opportunity of seeing the vexation occasioned by the pranks they play, still they can enjoy the thought of it; and will break a window slily, hide a workman's tool, or fasten up his door, for sake of the fancy of how much he will fret and fume when he comes to discover the roguery. Nor are our vulgar much better than overgrown boys in this particular; for if they can get into a fine garden, it is fun to them to break off an ornament, or disfigure a statue, or make any spoil they think will give much disturbance; and they find a supreme delight in teazing an idiot, a deformed person, or a foreigner that has the ill luck to fall in their way.

But it is not the engagingness of mischief alone that makes us hurtful to one another; our very wants and desires, which first bring us together, have a tendency likewise to dissociate us: for the same materials of gratification being wanted by several, and that selfishness which is our first principle of action prompting each to appropriate them to himself, this gives rise to competitions, contentions, jealousies, and aversions. The most obvious advantage we can take of another is by

by getting something away from him, and the method occurring readiest to make the sight of him entertaining is by doing him a displeasure: for it requires some acquaintance with the tastes, and character, and disposition, to know how we can oblige a man, or wherein we can have the benefit of his assistance or pleasures of his conversation, but one may take away or snatch up what lies between us, or do hurt to any body one never saw before.

And having reason to expect the same first motions in others we have been conscious of in ourselves, it gives us an unfavourable opinion of new faces: besides, while it is uncertain whether they stand well or ill disposed towards us, prudence will direct to guard against the latter in the first place, and keep us upon our self-defence until we know something more particularly of them. Therefore children are shy and fearful among strangers, and the vulgar come among them with either a dread or a defiance, according as they think themselves stout enough to make their party good: nor do men wear off these sentiments until by converse in the world they learn to know dispositions by looks and appearances, and become well versed in the methods of civility proper for removing all suspicions of themselves, and ingratiating

with

with whatever company they fall into. But so long as fears and jealousies subsist, it is natural to use the utmost efforts for driving off or disabling the causes of them: therefore I imagine that if two companies of savages, utterly unknown to each other, should happen to meet, they would fall a fighting: and we of the civilized countries have still so much of the savage left in us, that we fall a censuring, ridiculing, observing blemishes, and picking holes in characters, manners, and sentiments. Nor perhaps are there many, who if they examine themselves narrowly, might not find, that they rarely come into company, unless of intimates, without a little spice of hostile disposition and a spirit of defiance, though their good sense and good breeding overpower and stifle it.

5. These observations upon the turns that human nature takes spontaneously were, I suppose, the inducements with Hobbes to lay down, that men were born enemies to one another, and that it was nothing but necessity and weakness which drove them into society to provide for their mutual defence: but it had become a philosopher to have gone to the bottom of things, and not charge upon nature what does not appear in us until some time after we come out of her hands. Whoever observes little children

dren may perceive them wholly wrapped up within themselves, attentive only to present sensations of pleasure and pain; so they are born with neither friendship nor enmity, but have the seeds sown in them that will produce both: and if we must ascribe the plants to nature because she furnishes the soil and the seeds, we may with as much justice say they are born friends to the species, as enemies. For the pleasures they receive from any thing naturally inclines them to affect the source from whence they flow, and the tendence of their parents or people about them, the entertainment found among their play-fellows, and habitude with the rest of the family, give them a concern for persons: so that they will cry upon seeing mamma, or nurse, or brother, or sister, or John, or Molly in pain, without apprehension of any hurt to redound therefrom to themselves. On the other hand, as the active powers increase, and observation enlarges her field, they produce wantonness and greediness; which are mere selfish motions at first, but quickly beget suspicion, strangeness, variance, and antipathy.

For Providence does not give us the motives of action immediately by the hand of nature, but lays the springs of them, and places us in such situation as will call them severally

severally forth to operate, so as to produce that series of events which was designed to pass among free agents: for the benefits and pleasures we daily receive frome one another invite us to union and society, as our competitions and fears urge us to discord; which two powers, by their opposite action, counterbalance and give motion to each other: for being wisely mingled together in due proportion, they invigorate industry, whet contrivance, and furnish out all the business of the world. Their effects have been remarked in ancient times, for we find by Hesiod, that Eros and Eris, that is, Love and Strife, were holden to be the two antagonist powers which produced order out of Chaos: but their province was carried farther than we have had occasion to consider it, being extended to the natural as well as the moral world: for attraction and repulsion were supposed to be the same among matter, as union and discord among mankind.

But Eros and Eris, though heretofore esteemed first principles of motion, are not properties annexed by Omnipotence, but effects worked by the provisions of Wisdom. I have already shewn them not innate in the human mind, but growing from the appetites excited by pleasure and pain: neither can they be inherent properties of matter, for nothing can

can act where it is not; therefore when bodies approach, or recede from others at a distance how small soever, they must be driven to or from each other by external impulse of something touching or striking upon them. So their action is the result of some other cause, of whose nature and manner of operation we know nothing, nor can scarce so much as conjecture; though we find it made to act in such admirable contrivance, as to produce all that variety of regular motions we call the courses of Nature.

Nevertheless, there is this difference between inanimate and perceptive Beings with respect to the final end to be worked out by the principles actuating them; that matter has no interest of its own, being incapable of receiving either good or evil, therefore whatever passes among it must be intended for the benefit of sentient creatures. But, were repulsion wholly to cease, attraction, being left without a competitor, must draw the whole material universe into one solid lump, which could excite no variety of perceptions in any Spirit: as on the other hand, were repulsion to reign alone, it must break the whole into single atoms, and keep them perpetually stationed at equal distances from each other, where they could exhibit as little variety as in their former state: in either case there would

would be a general quiescence, a dreary uniformity, with no succession of ideas, nor materials for science and intelligence to work upon. Therefore we may presume that Eros and Eris will for ever have a joint sway over the material world throughout every part of it, and their forces be so wisely adjusted together, as to produce all the assortments, separations, and motions, necessary for the uses of spiritual substance.

But with respect to the latter, which has an interest in what passes among it, and is capable of good and evil, the case is widely different: for Eris generates hurt and mischief, so that were it to prevail alone in the world, there would be nothing but havock, vexation, and misery. Whereas Eros begets harmony, encrease of strength, mutual good offices, and happiness; and when vigorous, will prove a sufficient spur to industry without aid of its antagonist: we find by experience that, in proportion as we can improve the influence of this power, things go on with us more currently and smoothly, our wants are better supplied, our accommodations better provided for, our pleasures multiplied, our troubles lessened, nor have we so much time hanging heavy upon our hands for want of employment. The blessed Spirits above, exalted to the perfection of their nature,

ture, live altogether under the influence of Eros, yet is their happiness compleat and uninterrupted; nor have we reason to suppose their activity ever lying unemployed, either in giving testimony of gratitude to their Creator, in carrying on his designs, or in works productive of benefit to their fellow-creatures.

Perhaps the troubles abounding among embodied Spirits, and the dreadful miseries among some of the inorganized, occasioned by the discordant power, may be a necessary spectacle, directing them what measures to pursue, by warning them what to avoid: for we cannot well account for the permission of evil in this world, and severity of punishment consequent upon it in the next; otherwise than by some signal benefit redounding therefrom to higher orders of being: but the spectacle alone suffices for them, nor have they occasion for any mixture of the malignant principle among themselves. But among mankind as human nature at present stands circumstanced, the joint action of both powers is requisite: not that the benignant principle might not answer all our purposes compleatly, had we enough of it in our breasts to overcome that averseness to labour, and indulgence of appetite, which are perpetual clogs upon our activity; and strength of

mind enough to take effectual warning from mischiefs at a distance, without their immediately touching ourselves. But we being not so happily constituted, Eris is permitted to hold sway among us, to supply our deficiency in the other principle whereto it was intended to conduct us: for the smart of its evil effects rouzes us up to a little consideration, and dear-bought experience gradually encreases our value for that better influence whereby we might avoid them.

Thus Eros and Eris must perpetually work upon matter as joint operators to produce all those modifications and changes of form which constitute the health and beautify the face of Nature: but among spiritual substances the former is the sole end had in view, and the latter only as a means employed to lead thereto through the stages of imperfection. For God has thought proper not to put mankind at once in possession of that harmony whereto they were created, but draws them into it insensibly by the workings of a contrary principle: and with a little careful observation upon the course of affairs upon earth, we may discern many of the steps by which discord helps us forward in our approaches towards union.

7. The continual supply of necessaries and conveniencies from parents, the engagement and

and solace they find in the care of their children, and pleasures mutually received among play-fellows, first cement us together, raise us a little out of ourselves, and begin a family attachment: and though greediness and wantonness sometimes a little disturb the union, yet the visible expedience of preserving it unbroken, keeps them within bounds. But with respect to persons between whom such union has not been cemented, there is no apparent expedience to lay a restraint upon those turbulent humours: so they are left to take their full scope, from whence injury, abuse, and continual suspicion must ensue. And this fear of strangers protects and encreases the attachment to intimates, for a man never enjoys his friends so heartily as after having been teazed or terrified among persons he distastes, nor ever is so fond of home as when apprehensive of danger abroad; nor perhaps could we keep our boys from continually running away, if they might expect the same kindness and tender usage every where as they meet with from our hands. Thus to take a metaphor from matter, the repellent quality of external bodies holds their internal parts together in a stronger cohesion.

But single families cannot furnish all the accommodations convenient for them within

themselves, nor find that variety of amusements the human mind requires to prevent satiety from creeping upon it; they must soon perceive that one can supply what another wants, and one has hit upon methods of entertainment which are new and unthought of by the other: alliances, commerce, and mutual intercourse give them a liking to one another, and join them into cities or districts; which become larger families wherein each individual has some concern for the rest, because contributing to his uses or pleasures; and the bands of union are extended to a wider compass. Yet rapaciousness and wantonness still continuing parts of the human character, the inhabitants of one district or city will be apt to invade the properties of another, who will naturally exert themselves and set their wits to work to contrive methods of defence, or of retaliation upon the invaders: but finding themselves too weak to effect a perfect security, both against open violence and secret fraud, or being tired of perpetual squabbles with their neighbours, they will try to strike up an agreement with them, or to associate themselves with some other cities, which together may form a nation sufficient in extent and power to repel invaders, and preserve domestic quiet.

Thus perhaps it may be true that men were

were first driven into large communities by fear and self-defence, because in a state of nature they might not be sensible of any other benefits redounding from them: but having once tasted the sweets of society, they would not want other motives to hold them in it. For I may venture an appeal to the most selfish person among us, having any sober consideration of his own good, whether if he could be fully secured against all foreign invasions or domestic robberies, thefts, and injuries, he would yet be content to have a general anarchy prevail in the land, and would not regret the want of those markets, public buildings, posts, highways, and encouragements of arts, sciences, and manufactures, which are the effects of a national polity.

Nor is it any more than a perhaps that nations were actually first formed solely by fear: they may have been families, descendants of one ancestor, grown by numerous encrease into a people, or colonies transplanted from thence into an uninhabited country; and this opinion is countenanced by ancient history. Or if any of them were made up of persons no ways related by nature; there were other means of collecting them together besides the dread of danger: for we may gather from the fables of Orpheus and Amphion drawing stones,

stones, and tigers, and bears after them by the sweetness of their music, that it was not by terrors they drove the wild men dispersed about the forests and mountains into society, but lured them by the prospect of advantages and pleasures greater than they had experienced in their savage state.

Nevertheless, if fear and necessary self-defence had a share in the origin of states, this will only confirm what I have advanced before concerning the method taken by Providence in using the mischiefs of discord to bring men acquainted with the benefits of concord, and make their mutual attachment among one another more general. For whatever inducement first gathered them into nations, when once associated therein they have a national interest, and some degree of regard for all their fellow-members; they take part in every national prosperity, stand up for the honour of the nation, and are ready to think a compatriot braver, stouter, more accomplished and more deserving than any foreigner. How confident is our mob that one Englisman can beat two Frenchmen! How proud the French populace of living under an absolute monarch, who has their all at his disposal! and pity the poor unhappy Englishman for having a property of his own which the King cannot take away.

8. But

8. But the old leaven of wantonness and greediness, too deeply worked into human nature ever to be totally discharged again, spreads itself in families, cities, nations, or whatever other combinations men can be thrown into, and gains a new form in large communities which it could not assume before, turning into lust of fame and power. Hence proceed wars, encroachments, inroads, plunderings, conquest, and tyranny: yet these evils were not utterly unproductive of their salutary fruits, conquest having often ended in uniting several nations under one empire, The four great monarchies, though not universal as they were called, overspread a considerable part of the habitable earth: they must have produced great oppression, distress, and confusion at first, till in a little time things fell into a settled course, and the inhabitants lived more quietly and happily than they had done in their former condition. For the conquerors and conquered incorporated by degrees into one people, having a communion of interests and continual intercourse among them: whereby the bands of union, the sinews of commerce, and links of society, were stretched farther than they had ever been before. And even while wars and national animosities subsist, they tend to cement the union of individuals with the

the community: therefore it is a common artifice of policy to give ill impressions of a foreign nation, to make the subjects join more heartily against a detested enemy.

At the beginning of the last war, the French charged us with robberies and piracies for making reprisals upon their ships: and we in return branded them with dissimulation, treachery, and total disregard of the most solemn treaties, so that French faith became the same among us as Punic faith had been among the Romans. While the war lasted, we all loved our king and one another prodigiously, but scarce were preliminaries signed before we fell a squabbling among ourselves, for we are such boys that we must be doing mischief rather than nothing: if we cannot find employment in business, we must make it by wantonness; which takes delight to encourage revilings, calumnies, scandalous insinuations, and sometimes even indecencies against Majesty itself, all for want of better employment; and prompts to conclude our entertainments with drinking healths not so much in honour to the toast as in vexation to one another: nor do I doubt but that if a fair computation could be made, it would appear there has been more money thrown away within these few years upon ingenious Billingsgate in prose and verse, fit only to nourish

nourish the irritating humours, than has been laid out upon books of religion, morality, or science, which might mend the heart or improve the understanding. But we may presume all these evils operate to some good, though what good, it might be difficult for mortal man to guess: perhaps we should all doze in indolence, or be eaten up with the spleen in this humid climate, if we had not something to keep our bile in motion.

Nevertheless, it must be owned upon the whole, that those two qualities whereto I have ascribed the rise of the discordant passions, have been productive of signal advantages to mankind: for manufactures and commerce have been better improved, more arts invented, more accomplishments attained, more public works, as well military as civil, achieved, more regularity, decency, and civility produced, by the impulse of covetousness or lust of fame, and that under-twig of it, vanity, than could be expected from what feeble sentiment of prudence and public spirit we possess. Even war, robbery, and wantonness have given occasion to many inventions and exercises of industry that would have been needless without them: the danger of encroachments among neighbouring states keeps them attentive to preserve the balance of power, thereby creating a common interest,

and

and introduce an alliance and harmony between nations that might otherwise have remained for ever strangers; and the mutual jealousies of parties awaken the vigilance of the people, and render abuses of power less practicable. Thus the wisdom of Providence has mingled all varieties, both of the harmonizing and jarring passions, adjusted to one another in such admirable proportion as to form together a salutary composition, by which mankind has been gradually raised from their original ignorance and wildness to the degree of knowledge, discretion, mutual concern, and communion of interests, we see them arrived at in this present age.

9. Yet this wonderful complication of counteracting springs could not render the harmony compleat among spiritual substances without a knowledge of God: for it is the origin from one common Father, the presidency of one Governor, that unites the whole Universe into one empire, and constitutes us citizens of the World; and that knowledge has proceeded slowly through many stages of error and imperfection. For God has been pleased to draw mankind in the approach towards him by steps that seemed to carry them directly from him, and lead them into just ideas of his Attributes through notions the most opposite to his character.

character. A cordial hope and unreserved trust are the proper bands uniting the creature to the Creator; but these bands cannot well be twisted up of fear; yet it is said, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, necessary to introduce that very Charity which when perfect will cast it utterly away; and the fear of hobgoblins has sometimes proved the secret avenue conducting into the fear of the Lord. For this first loosened the attachment to objects of sense, and put the savage upon efforts of reflection concerning the things unseen: which efforts, though faint and fruitless, and perhaps hurtful in themselves, yet opened the passage and cleared the way into the fields of reason and contemplation.

It seems reasonable to imagine, that persons who had gotten an awe over others, would endeavour to preserve the influence of that awe when their backs were turned, and for that purpose might notch a stick into something that could be fancied a human face, setting it up in a corner with pretence that it would inform them of whatever should be done contrary to their orders in their absence. Such stratagems as these require no great invention, our nurses, the silliest set of people among us, can hit upon the like: for they tell their children of an old man in the

the cupboard that will take them away when they are naughty; and if they play unlucky tricks slily, the little bird that peeps in at the window will tell of it.

Then if some person who had been greatly reverenced among them happened to die, the thought and the want of him would remain strong for a while upon the minds of those left behind: they would frequently dream of him, and those dreams, among a gross and simple people would sometimes be taken for real conversations. This would give an easy handle to such as were more cunning than the rest, to pretend an intercourse with the departed, and by means of orders or advices feigned to have been received from them, to work their ends upon the others. In a little time they might improve upon their first inventions, and find an account in enlarging the powers of the deceased, ascribing to them the management of rains, and winds, and weather, of increase and sterility in cattle, the fruits of the earth, and herbs of the field; giving them an influence upon the courses of fortune, the turn of events, and success of transactions among the living. And as some of these venerated names would be handed down to succeeding generations, among whom everything relating to the persons had been forgotten, this would naturally give a rise to a distinction

distinction between the immortal gods, of whose origin nobody could give an account, and heroes, or demi-gods who had been remembered conversant upon earth: for the Theogony of Hesiod, and other genealogies seem to have been additions of the poets and naturalists endeavouring to embellish or allegorize the popular opinions, as appears probable from the great variety of lineages deduced among them.

By these means the belief of beings in the air having an influence upon the courses of things below, might be established among an ignorant people, which, though extremely gross and imperfect, were some benefit to them: for as it is better the child should stand in awe of the old man in the cupboard, or the little bird at the window, than be under no check at all, so it is better men should think Apollo or Pallas, a stick or a statue, observes whether they do right or wrong, than have no restraint upon their actions whatever. Besides, the benefit this notion was of to mankind in general is more to be considered than that it might do to the persons entertaining it; and it was one step, though a very small one, in the progress of true religion in the world. For the persuasion of an invisible Power, observant of what passes among us, and having an influence upon the affairs of men,

men, is the first article of a sound and saving faith; and how much soever the notions of such power were confused, inconsistent, and absurd, still the general opinion of its existence was a point gained, which would make another step in useful knowledge more easy to be taken: for an instructor will have less to do with one who already admits a superior Being, of whatever kind or quality, than with one who is so totally immersed in objects of sense as to have no conception of any thing he does not see, or hear, or handle; because in the latter he must inculcate the reality of such Being before he can proceed to shew what it is; whereas he may lead the other by pointing out his inconsistencies into something of a more regular and uniform system.

10. At first we may presume that men would have no farther concern, than for the preservation, the accommodations, and pleasures of life; but as they advanced in society, and fell into a more settled way of living, they would extend their thoughts beyond their own immediate wants, and begin to take an interest in the welfare of their children and descendants, after themselves should be no more. Their veneration likewise, and the honour they saw paid to the memory of such as had been eminent among them, would excite a wish to obtain the like for their own names:

names: this must extend their concern beyond the present life, and make them desirous of gaining an immortality by living for ever in the remembrance of those who should come after them. Add further that the workings of their own imagination or confident assertions of some who had an end to serve thereby, might persuade them that some part of their own persons would survive after death, remaining capable of wants and gratifications, of enjoyment and suffering; and they might soon conclude that the prosperity of their children, the continuance of their names, and good or evil fortune of their surviving part, would depend upon their present conduct, and the favour of the immortal gods or heroes.

Here is now a second step gained in the progress towards true religion: for besides the belief of a superintending Power, presiding over the affairs of men, here is a concern for futurity, and a persuasion that our interest therein will stand affected by our management upon earth, and by our cares to engage the protection and escape the displeasure of Heaven; and thus we see how Providence may employ the mingled operations of fear, credulity, artifice, and vanity, to work a general reception of two fundamental articles. Nevertheless, it may be expected that

that those articles in their infancy must lie overwhelmed among a multitude of gross errors and absurdities: for the passions of men, the examples of vice, folly, and contention among the most admired, the interest of states, the craft of private persons, accidental impressions of fear and fantastic rovings of imagination, each adding something of its own, must together make up a motley mixture.

And accordingly we find in all ancient history what a multitude of incoherencies and absurdities abounded in the first received creeds, concerning the immortal Gods and Demi-gods, the wars, rebellions, quarrels, thefts, over-reachings, amours, infidelities, and partialities among them, their inhabitancy in statues made by men, their declarations by oracles, omens, and prodigies; concerning the apparitions of shades and spectres, the enjoyments of Elysium and punishments of Tartarus. Yet it being obvious that no community could subsist upon earth without something of order and government, there was the like notion of a subordination and assignment of particular provinces among the Gods. Jove ruled the heavens, Neptune over the sea, Pluto in the infernal regions; Minerva had the patronage of wisdom; Apollo of wit; Mercury of cunning; Ceres presided over eatables, and Bacchus over drinkables: but

that

that they might not encroach upon one anthers' provinces, as such Gods subject to the worst of human passions might be apt to do, Jove had a supreme authority over all.

Which last notion opened a narrow passage towards the unity of the Godhead, yet was even this little avenue choaked up with doubts and confusion; for the Parcæ were holden sometimes to control the Will of Jove, sometimes only to enforce his decrees by their spinning, and if he had once bound himself by Styx, he durst not recede though he should afterwards change his mind; so one cannot well tell whether Jove, though supreme over the Gods, had not another supreme power over him.

Such fluctuations and incoherencies in the popular doctrines set reflection at work, and gave birth to philosophy: for reason must have materials furnished it from elsewhere to begin upon, and philosophers, as well as other men, once were children, susceptible of impressions stamped upon them by their teachers or worked into them by their companions; nor could their sagacity, when mature enough to act for itself, do any more than examine the opinions they had imbibed, endeavouring to separate the solid from the empty, and pursue such farther lights as could be stricken out from what had stood the test. But the

reason of one man can run very little lengths, for his life will be almost spent in getting rid of erroneous prejudices before he can begin to make an advance towards truth; and his discovery will require time to settle into something of a current opinion, before it can serve as a foundation for another to proceed upon.

11. The earliest persons of thought and careful reflection, such I mean as were not actuated by ambition or avarice, seem to have been legislators and founders of states; and the immortality they had in view, to have been that of perpetuating their names among posterity with love and honour for the services they had done. For having found beneficence, even to succeeding generations, had in general esteem, and striking to their moral sense, they supposed it innate, the perfection of human nature, and noblest sentiment upon which a reasonable creature could act: and indeed they were right, though without knowing why, Providence thus leading them by the general estimation into the most extensive Charity their situation was capable of, and the prosecution of their own truest interests. It were mere guess-work to say what was their belief of the Gods and a future state, for being perfectly satisfied with the principle whereon they proceeded,

they

they might be too much taken up with that to think closely of any thing else, and studied only how to turn popular opinions to the best advantage of the communities under their care.

Next arose persons who were desirous of going to the bottom of things, and investigating the causes of all the phenomena observable around: these were the philosophers who, finding the Gods esteemed the Governors only, not makers of the World, interfering now and then occasionally to set things right when running amiss, and controled in their measures by dread of Styx and distaffs of the Parcæ, concluded there were some general laws of nature governing both Gods and men; so set themselves to study the primary properties and elementary principles of bodies, in order to frame hypotheses of the manner wherein all visible productions might be framed from thence. Thus the first philosophers seem to have been merely naturalists, employing only the names of the Gods to allegorize the powers of Nature: for with them Jove was the ether, Juno the air, Neptune water, Vulcan fire, Cybele the earth, Pluto subterraneous vapours and minerals, Minerva understanding, Apollo genius, Mercury craft, and so on. Or if they had any thing of the Theologian, and held the existence of intelligent

beings superior to man, they supposed them productions of the finer elements, as they did the first men of the grosser: for they made Jove, the Father of the Gods, the Son of Chronos, or Time and Rhea, or the Flood, that is, produced by the workings of mechanical causes in the efflux of rolling years.

But the study of nature, carefully and honestly pursued, will at last conduct to its Author, but by gentle steps and in length of time: so that if we transfer our expression from the essence of God to the knowledge of him, we may truly say, this was the offspring of Chronos. For when some close-thinking man had discovered a cause of the visible phenomena, he had done, leaving to his successor to find out the cause of that cause, which perhaps he might find among the operations of matter; a third would push on his enquiries a little farther, till speculation having run the utmost length of its line, and still finding matter incapable of furnishing a cause which was not the effect of some prior agency, recourse must be had at last to an immaterial Being.

12. It is not easy to ascertain the time when Philosophy first rose out of political science and corporeal objects: we have heard great things of Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, and other sages of earliest antiquity, but the accounts

accounts of them are much too imperfect and uncertain to be depended upon. Cudworth will have it probable that Orpheus taught the doctrine of the Trinity, or three co-eternal Hypostases in one Substance; but if we may take Cicero's word, Thales was the first who discovered an intelligent principle operating in the birth of Nature: for he held that all things were formed out of water, but that Mind or Intelligence was what threw the water into these various cohesions, forms, and motions, which we call the productions of Nature. One cannot certainly tell whether he made his mind a distinct substance from the water, or only a quality residing, not in the single drops, but in the whole mass: for the ancients, as I have already taken notice in CHAP. XIII. entertained a notion, that quality had an existence of its own distinct from that of the subject whereto it belonged, and inexisting in it; which existence was in the compounds, not in the several component parts, for there is no beauty in the single bricks, the mortar, the wood work, the glass panes of a house; the beauty resides in the whole composition aptly put together.

It seems most likely he had this latter idea, and so was not a compleat Theist; because we find the introduction of Theism, that is, the doctrine of an intelligent Agent, the Author

thor of Nature, and substantially distinct from the materials whereon he worked, claimed for Pythagoras in those called the golden verses; where he is alluded to as the person who first opened the Psyche, or the Spirit imprisoned in the human body, a knowledge of the unfathomable Tetrachtys, the fountain of ever-flowing nature, that is, the sacred name of four letters: by which Dacier says he meant Jehovah, which it seems in Hebrew contains only four letters, but it might as well have been ΖΕΥΣ or ΘΕΟΣ. It is pity Pythagoras did not talk English, for the name God having no more than three letters, he would then have preached up the worship of the sacred Triad, and Dacier might have been positive he had believed in the Trinity.

The epithet ever-flowing applied to Nature, is expounded by his commentators to signify only, that it shall last for ever, not that it has already had course from eternity: yet I must beg leave to be excused from placing any more implicit faith in the commentators upon the golden verses, than those upon the Bible. For when we recollect the received tenet among Philosophers, that whatever was generated in time must be corrupted in time, the future perpetuity of Nature will infer its prior eternity: nor is this inconsistent with its springing from a fountain, for where the fountain

fountain is eternal, the stream may well have run for ever. Against their exposition of the Oath we are exhorted to reverence, I have no objection; for this seems a proper term to express the perfect freedom of the divine agency, because nothing could compel or induce him to swear besides his own voluntary choice; and immutability of the divine purpose, which for ever has and will preserve the courses of Nature, and the same order of succession in her changes; so that the several parts may take new forms in continual rotation, but the Universe remain always the same.

Hierocles explains the three first lines as describing three distinct orders of being essentially and perpetually different, their conditions not interchangeable with those of each other; which are the immortal Gods, the Heroes full of light, and the subterraneous Intelligences. Now, though instead of subterraneous he has used the epithet terrestrial, a translation which the learned Dacier tells us the Greek word can never bear, it is agreed on all hands that by those Intelligencies are to be understood the souls of the good men departed, which the same Dacier assures us were holden by the Pythagoreans to mount up into Ether and not to sink under ground.

But it is the surest way to expound the text

text by the text, and if we turn to the end of the poem, we shall find it conclude with an exhortation to follow the precepts therein contained, because whoever does so, will, upon getting rid of body, go into the pure Ether and become an immortal God, incorruptible, no longer subject to death. Besides we learn from Virgil, who has never been charged with misrepresenting the Pythagorean doctrines, that there is an activity and celestial origin belonging to those seeds from whence grew the race of men, the cattle, all species of wild beasts, and fish of the sea: and in another passage, that the bees too possess a part of the divine mind, and have imbibed the ethereal draughts, from whence men and animals drew their birth, and whereinto all shall be returned and resolved again; so that there is no such thing as death, but the living principles fly off into the upper heavens, and mingle among the stars.

All these things considered, one cannot imagine Pythagoras so inconsistent with himself as to hold three distinct, unchangeable natures in the regions unseen: we must suppose him recommending a veneration for them only, in compliance with the received opinions, to which all philosophers, except our modern minute ones, have ever shewn a decent

cent respect: but teaching among his adepts, that all created spirit was homogeneous, eternal, but produced by the divine will an eternity ago, and passing through various stages or forms of being in rotation; so that from an immortal God it might become a bee, a dolphin, a sheep, a lion, a man, or a hero full of light, according to the material organizations wherein it lay enveloped, and when dissolved from all vital union with matter whatever, would return to pure ether, and be an immortal God again.

Therefore, if I might offer my sense of the three first verses, I should construe or paraphrase them as follows, In the first place worship the immortal Gods conformably to the ritual established in your country, and at the same respect the immutable nature of things, receiving their stability from the eternal purpose of the Almighty, sacred and inviolable as an Oath: in the next place, pay due honours to the Heroes full of light: nor omit to celebrate the memory of illustrious persons that have been laid under-ground, by such festivals and commemorations as are customary. The meaning of these precepts I take to be, that we should use our reason, drawn from the contemplation of Nature, jointly with popular Religion, correcting the errors of the one by the other, employing either

ther where most proper to bring those we have to deal with a step nearer towards the knowledge of their Maker, and universal Charity to their fellow-creatures, in such way as they can follow, and thereby steering clear between the bigot and the freethinker.

13. However this be, and whether Pythagoras were the discoverer, it can scarcely be denied, that in his time there was the belief of a God in the proper sense of the word as we now use it, an omnipotent, intelligent, unproduced Being, Author of Nature and all her works: for the gods we have spoken of before were nothing more than huge flying men, of enormous strength, and bodies so finely contexted as to render them invisible, unless when they had a mind to show themselves by assuming a covering from the grosser elements. There was likewise the opinion of a future state of bliss and immortality, equal, or I may say preferable to that of the Gods vulgarly worshipped, whereto men might rise by a steady rectitude of sentiment and conduct, that is, by Faith and good Works.

Here were great and important advances maintained ever after in the true Church of Philosophy, if I may so call it, for there have been grievous schisms and heresies there as well as in Religion; and the latter Academics were errant freethinkers, never having any opinion

opinion of their own, but combating every body's else: if you said snow was white they would prove you mistaken, if you said it was black they would do as before; if you asked what they thought themselves, they would aswer they could not tell, for it might be either. But I am scarce entitled to call it a Church, as consisting of Clergy alone without a congregation; for there never yet was a people of Philosophers, nor ever could be, their Credenda being too refined and speculative for vulgar comprehension: neither had they authority enough to introduce a form of words serviceable for general use, which each person might understand in a grosser, or more refined sense, according to his respective capacity, yet conveying as compleat a system as his understanding can contain.

Nor yet were their tenets either compleat or fully established even in the closets of the studious: for Tully, in his Tusculan disputation upon death, argued in the disjunctive, either that death put an utter end to us, or was the passage into a more perfect state; urging that in the former case it is a perpetual quiet sleep, without uneasy dreams, and upon that score we have no reason to be afraid of it; which argument might have been spared if he had not thought the other branch of the disjunctive doubtful. And in other places where

where he exhorts to the performance of noble actions, he speaks as much of an immortality by an honourable remembrance among posterity, as by any other way.

They do not appear to have had any thought of Creation, but believed God the Maker, not the First Cause or Creator of all things: Thales assigned him water to make a world with, Anaximenes fire; Anaxagoras a multitude of diversly shaped corpuscles, similar to the visible bodies composed of them; Plato seems to have had a notion of Substance in the abstract, which he calls Hyle, devoid of all form or quality whatever, until God was pleased to impress them upon it from archetypes in his own mind, and then it became a variety of bodies having specific differences, but was naked Substance before ever he took it in hand. To go as low as Seneca, who was perhaps the best Philosopher of his time, we find him starting a doubt whether God made his own materials, or only worked up such as he found already in being; by which question may be meant no more than whether the elements had an inherent specific difference of their own, or were all compounded of the same Materia prima variously put together, and so it does not touch the point of creation at all. However, Seneca himself declares positively for the pre-existence of the materials,

materials, reserving the workmanship alone for the Province of Omnipotence, and pretends to account for the existence of moral evil this way: for, says he, God is good, willing to have made good men of us all, and has worked up the finest of his materials into such as far as they would go, but the rest of the elements were so untoward and cross-grained that it was impossible to make better creatures of them than has been done.

They had not, or at least did not take care to inculcate a sufficiently large idea of Providence comprehending the turns of events, respecting single persons as well as the great and general laws of Nature: for we find in Tully's Nature of the Gods, that the Stoics, the most orthodox philosophers of those days, and strenuous asserters of Providence, held that God takes care of great things, but overlooks the small; and though they descended to the veriest trifles in matters of dreams, omens, prodigies, and phrenetic predictions, they ascribed those to an unaccountable sympathy in nature between certain things, not to declarations of the divine Will.

The dependence of free agency upon prior causes, and the foundations of Justice, were not clearly understood, nor could they comprehend how God might give us both to will and to do, without destroying the expectation

tion of reward for well doing: so they supposed virtue an original acquisition of the mind, by self-exerted efforts, without any thing exterior prompting or directing her thereto. Agreeably to which notion we see Horace praying, Give me competence of fortune, give me talents; as for perseverance in the right use of them, I will procure that for myself: thus denying God more than half his glory, and the acknowledgment due for the best of his gifts. In consequence of this opinion they conceived an intrinsic self-worked difference in men, which made them too regardless or too despairing of the generality, calculating their systems for a few contemplative, rightly-disposed persons, not endeavouring to draw out from thence a form of doctrine that might be commonly intelligible, and universally serviceable; nor acting in concert to recommend it, whereby they might have had more weight upon the vulgar.

They made no effectual advances towards propagating the doctrine of Equity and Equality, whereby God appears to be the common Father and equal Protector of all, neither arbitrary in his dealings nor partial in his favours, as a respecter of persons: that firmest basis of a general interest, strongest cement of mutual union, and clearest rational avenue to universal Charity.

Nor

Nor did they thoroughly enough consider the nature of man, treating their scholars as purely rational creatures, not sensitivo-rational; scarce reflecting, that the bulk of mankind have most of the sensitive, and all men a considerable part of it in their composition, and that the impulses of one faculty may be mistaken for judgments of the other: neither did they study the use of ceremonies, customs, and methods, whereby habit and imagination may be brought insensibly to assist in the services of reason.

Yet I would not by any means undervalue the sages of antiquity, nor lessen the veneration due to them for the benefits redounding to us from their labours, whereby they were aiding as instruments in the hand of Providence, towards nursing up human reason to the degree of vigour and soundness we find it now possess. Therefore their merit might be no ways inferior to the best among us, nor might our Divines and Philosophers, placed in their situation, have made a whit better advances: if we can now soar greater heights, it is not owing to our greater strength of wing, but to the advantage afforded us of taking our rise from higher ground.

14. One cannot well determine how far Philosophy might have pushed on her course by repeated efforts in successive generations. Possibly

Possibly one man's reason, still digesting and improving upon the discoveries of another, might at last have attained as much useful knowledge as the human understanding is capable of receiving: wherein would be contained a compleat Theology, a clear discernment of the true links uniting the Whole in a general interest, and a practicable system of morality, accommodated to the several uses and capacities of all mankind; and means might have been found to render these things intelligible to every one so far as to answer all his occasions, so that a sound Faith, a well-grounded Hope, and an unreserved Charity might become general, which must have restored a golden age, a paradisaical state.

But God judged proper not to wait the slow advances of human speculation; he has been graciously pleased to hasten the progress by making provision of causes for several providential events. The art of printing has contributed greatly to the advancement of learning, but this was not the discovery of any philosopher: the world was long ago acquainted with the method of stamping inscriptions upon medals and seals, which one would think might have put some curious person upon contriving to stamp the pages of a book; yet was this never thought of until

until the appointed time written in the book of Heaven.

Glass was the invention of some manufacturer having no more in view than the raising a fortune by his new manufacture: but from hence we are supplied with microscopes, telescopes, and prisms, which let us into secrets of Nature unsuspected before, open to us the immeasurable grandeur of the Universe, and bring us acquainted with animals to whom a spoonful of vinegar serves for a habitable world; thereby raising our idea of the Author of Nature by displaying the magnificence and the wonders of his works. From hence likewise have proceeded gradually a more exact knowledge of the laws of attraction, the velocity of light, the existence of ether, and extreme rarity of bodies. Thus the unlearned has been made to lend a helping hand to the contemplative in the prosecution of his science, and the man of this world instrumental in opening a larger field to our Theology.

The magnetic power of the loadstone was known two thousand years ago, but remained an object of idle curiosity for many ages, until not long since, the uses of the needle being hit upon, have opened a new world, given a readier access to remotest regions of

the old, and tended to familiarize the several nations upon earth.

Gunpowder is said to have been the lucky discovery of a monk, trying experiments without expectation of any such result; but how much has this changed the polity of nations, and civilized the rugged manners of war! making it depend more upon science than personal courage or bodily strength, uniting the civil in one interest with the military, which must protect industry and commerce to draw supplies from thence for the expensive preparations necessary; and spares a conquered country, to have its assistance in transporting the unwieldy machines, and because more may be expected from contributions than from plunder.

We may term these inventions accidental, and so indeed they were with respect to us, for no man could have foreseen the day beforehand when they would happen; but accidents arise from certain causes lying in train to produce them when, and in what manner they shall come to pass; and since those have had a great influence upon the affairs of men, they are worthy our referring to the Disposer of all events.

15. But the most evidently providential event, or rather train of events, and most quickening

quickening the progress of saving knowledge, was that of the Jewish dispensation. For accounts of this we must necessarily recur to the Old Testament, having nothing else that will carry us far enough back; for Homer, the oldest profane writer extant, is, I think, supposed cotemporary with Solomon, and the transactions he speaks of to have passed in the time of Jephtha: if there were other authors at hand, I should think it prudent to give them a due consideration, but since we have only Moses, we must be content with the materials he has furnished us. Nor must I upon this occasion regard him as an inspired writer, for it may be remembered the part I have taken upon me is that of a reconciler between contending parties, so I must proceed upon grounds that may be admitted on both sides: therefore I shall meddle with nothing supernatural, which might be objected against as incredible, but employ such parts only of his narration as might have been received upon the credit of Livy or any common historian. For the like reason I purpose to go no higher than Abraham, because it is the humour of some among us to regard all that has been recorded of the earlier and antediluvian times, as fabulous.

And I think it could not be doubted, had we no better authority than that of Livy for the

fact, that there was such a person, eminent in his time, and the founder of a family, whom he bred up in the belief of one God, supreme Governor of heaven and earth, and arbiter of the affairs of men; and preserved them from the contagion of superstition and idolatry prevailing every where round about. I shall not pretend to decide what we are to think of the angels with whom he is said to have been conversant, but we may gather thus much from the mention made of them, that he held there were intelligent creatures superior to man, but subordinate to God, and never interfering in human affairs unless when commissioned thereto by special orders from above: this their very name implies, for Angel is the same as Messenger, which shews that they were known to men no otherwise than by the errands they were supposed to be sent upon by their Master.

I am not concerned with the reality of those Angels' appearance, let him only have dreamt of them, and taken his dreams for realities: how came it he did not dream they were independent powers, self-existent, or produced by some fatality or plastic energy of Nature, and God only an Olympian Jove having a little more strength and authority than his fellow God? Or how happened it that nobody in other countries should ever dream of

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one supreme Power, Governor and Maker of all other Beings, before the time of Pythagoras, or suppose Thales, who was but a little earlier, and both of them many centuries posterior to Abraham? for he was no Philosopher, he never pried into the secrets of nature, nor pursued the demonstrations of mathematics, nor studied the courses of the heavenly bodies, nor dived into the depths of metaphysics; but was a plain man, occupied in the management of his cattle, and providing accommodations for his household; and his Theology was such as was intelligible, not only to adepts, but to his servants, his shepherds, and all under his influence.

Whence got he then this purity of sentiment concerning things unseen, unmingled with any thing of the notched stick, the old man in the cupboard, or the quarrelling, intriguing, over-reaching immortal Gods, the deified Heroes, or subterraneous Intelligences? We dare not say he received it by tradition from Noah and Adam, nor by supernatural illumination: for fear of bringing a discredit upon our intellects, as being too weak to throw off the prejudices of the nurse and the school-master, which would never stand the test of all-deciding ridicule. What then shall we say? was it the remains of a rational system stricken out by some Philosophers who lived

lived a thousand years before him, but whose works and even remembrance have been clean swept away by inundation of barbarous nations? or was it an accidental discovery springing originally from the notched stick by many gradations through the channels of fear, credulity, vanity, cunning, and policy among his predecessors?

We have not the least hint of any such primæval Sages or antepatriarchal Saracens, Goths, and Vandals, even in fabulous history: so their very existence is mere hypothesis, trumped up to serve a turn. But admitting the supposition, unsupported as it is by any shadow of evidence, how chanced it that those genuine remains were preserved only in his family? Or if craft and credulity sufficed to bear such excellent fruits, why could they never produce the same in any other soil? If it were the growth of mere natural causes, yet Nature and all her movements, as well accidental as regular, were laid out at her birth in the plan of the Almighty: we must therefore acknowledge it a particular Providence, that in the formation of this sublunary system he prepared natural causes to produce the seeds from whence in long process of time should spring a tree of sound knowledge overspreading the earth. It seems probable and appears to have been fact, if we may take Moses's

Moses's word, that the true God was known to Enoch, Melchisedeck, Noah, and others before Abraham, but they could not transmit it inviolate to their descendants: he first prevailed to make it the received doctrine among all his household, and entailed it as an unalienable estate upon his posterity; from whence he became entitled to be called the father of the faithful.

16. I shall not touch upon the blessing given to Isaac and Jacob, because this would be building upon controverted ground, but supposed it will be admitted that this family grew into a numerous nation, still possessed with the persuasion of one God omnipotent, Lord of heaven and earth, besides whom there was none other God; which persuasion was peculiar to themselves. For though most other nations had their patron God, upon whose protection they depended, yet they allowed their neighbours to have tutelary Deities too, contending often and struggling with their own: if they succeeded in an expedition they extolled their own God as the mightiest, if beaten they would pass over to the victorious God as the more potent; or at other times endeavour to keep upon good terms with both by taking the neighbouring Deity into a share of their worship. This last notion crept in at frequent intervals among the Israelites,

Israelites, from the days of the golden calves down to the end of their monarchical government: nevertheless the worship of Jehovah still continued the national Religion, and though sometimes overwhelmed for awhile, was never wholly stifled, but always revived again in full vigour.

At the captivity, when one might expect their distressed condition, by lessening the opinion of their protector, should have driven them into all the modes of their conquerors, as had happened to the ten tribes before them, on the contrary we find them rivetted more strongly in their primitive belief, so that idolatry and polytheism could never after find an entrance among them. It is not necessary for our present purpose that this should have been effected by a supernatural interposition; admit it were compassed by the craft and management of their principal men who used this cement to keep their people united together, as knowing that if they suffered them to mingle amongst others, they themselves must lose their influence and become persons of no consequence. But had not other enslaved nations, their principal men too, men of craft, and management, and ambition, as desirous of keeping a populace firmly attached to their interests? Yet which of them could ever bring a people, who had been

been perpetually wavering in the object of their worship at home, to become so unalterably fixed in the midst of strangers as never to admit a mixture of foreign worship again.

What if we should reject all the wonders of the Burning Bush, the Sun standing still, the exploits of Gideon and Sampson, making them interpolations of Ezra as artifices to strengthen the faith of his people: have not other writers elsewhere interpolated; invented, and forged? Yet could never establish a steady credit to pass down inviolate to succeeding generations. What then occasioned the difference? shall we say it was owing to chance or accidental circumstances in the character and condition of the populace? Be it so: still we know that chance casualty of circumstance, the machinations and successes of craft and policy, must proceed from their adequate causes, deriving in an unbroken chain from the springs first set at work by the Almighty in his formation of a world. Therefore when they concur to produce an event which will spread a beneficial influence upon all mankind in after ages, it falls properly within our description of things signally providential.

17. Let us now proceed to another persuasion of this people, grafted upon that of their being

being the peculiar care of God; I mean their expectation of an extraordinary person to arise among them. They had before believed, that God had established the house of David for ever, and that he would preserve the throne in that family against all the power of neighbouring princes to overturn it: but this hope proving abortive, they were then persuaded, there should arise one from his loins in due time who should restore the kingdom to Israel; and this opinion they built upon certain types and prophecies recorded in their ancient writings. I have nothing to do with the significancy of the types nor interpretation of the prophecies, the exact time when the sceptre may be truly said to have departed from Judah, nor propriety of understanding a promise made for the comfort of a besieged city, almost perishing with famine, to relate to a child who should be born a virgin above five hundred years after. Let the application be as forced and fantastical as you please, still they had their effect upon the imaginations of the people: and this is enough for my purpose.

For unless you will say, that God was ignorant what effect they would produce, or to what uses the priests and rulers would turn them, it must be allowed that he permitted the causes with a view to their consequences: therefore

therefore may be said to have spoken by them to the Jewish nation, in like manner as he speaks to our reason by his works of nature. But when God speaks, he will do it in a language to be understood by those to whom it is addressed, and exciting the ideas proper for them to entertain: it is no matter whether we or others can rationally understand them in the same manner or no, we might as well cavil that the prophecies were delivered in Hebrew instead of English, which we should have understood better. Certain it is they did suffice to answer their purpose of keeping up an expectation among the Jews, who began to grow impatient, and did actually persuade themselves, either upon solid or fancied grounds, that the Sceptre was departed, and their Shiloh at hand, about the time when Jesus entered upon his ministry.

Which national opinion was a necessary preparative for the introduction of his Gospel, which was confined to the Jews during his life, and for some time after: for we may gather from the story of Cornelius the Centurion that it had not been preached to any Gentile before, and must presume that the Partheans, Medes, and Elamites, making the three thousand to whom Peter preached, were Jews settled in those countries. But the expectation

pectation of a Restorer would not suffice alone, for it seems there were several pretenders to the benefit of it: there wanted the designation of some particular person in whom that general expectance might centre, and this was effected by a comparison of the prophecies with events, and by signs and wonders believed to have been worked by Jesus, and those delegated under him. I shall as before forbear to examine the accomplishment of the prophecies, or evidence of the miracles: to enter upon these discussions would be carrying the shoe-maker beyond his last, therefore shall leave them to Divines, who are better prepared for the work by a kind of learning I have not had time to make a proficiency in; nor do I find a want of it upon the present occasion.

For I desire no more to be granted me than what will scarce be disputed, that multitudes were drawn into a belief of the prophecies being accomplished, and the miracles really performed. Now whether this belief was worked by craft, prejudice, delusion, and enthusiasm, or by rational conviction upon a full, fair, and careful examination, all those springs of persuasion must be acknowledged to lie under the control of Providence: therefore the event produced by them having since extended so wide over the earth, must be re-

regarded

garded as one of the main engines employed in the administration of the moral world. By great distance of time, and an almost total difference in our forms of expression and methods of logic from those of the Jews, the evidences once fresh and glaring are become obscured, so that it often requires a fund of science to clear up a point which a common man in the Apostolic days might have satisfied himself of by a little enquiry among his neighbours.

But for the generality there are the sacred records received upon the authority of the Church: for the plain man justly concludes that a number of persons, whom he knows to be men of learning and good manners, would not combine to persuade him into a veneration for what they had no good grounds to believe themselves, therefore relies upon their judgment in a matter he stands in no situation to judge of himself. And herein he acts as rationally as one who takes down the drugs prescribed by a physician of whom he has a good opinion, though he understands nothing of their efficacy, nor can be certain upon his own knowledge whether they may not be poisonous. And for such as have some capacity to judge for themselves, but thinking themselves called to other exercises of their industry, are no more at leisure than

I to rummage over all the wilds of controversy, there is the internal evidence drawn from experience, and their own observation of the benefits accruing to mankind from the promulgation of the Gospel. Nor can I help repeating what I have once declared before, that to me the external evidence seems to be in reality the deciding weight with most men: for in the few controversial writings I have dipped into, I can perceive as much zeal and prejudice to the full in the free-thinker as in the orthodox; both appear sometimes to think too well or too ill of the external evidences, according to their preconceived opinion of the cause.

18. Perhaps I shall be stopped short here with a round assertion that the influence has neither been so salutary nor so extensive as I seem to insinuate; for that Christians are not so good men as the Turks, the Chinese, the Tartars, or the Iroquois, nor are they more than an inconsiderable number in comparison with those we term infidels; Gordon, in his Geography, computes more than half the countries upon earth to be Mahometan, and of the remainder, the greater part are Heathen, and the lesser Christian. But we may claim Mahometism as a botchy excrescence or spurious offspring of the Gospel: the professors of it preserve a great veneration for

for Isa or Jesus, look upon him much in the same light as we do Elias, and pretend that their prophet was the Comforter of whom we have promise in the Gospel; their Koran inculcates some of the most important truths contained therein, as I shall remark particularly by-and-by, and what there is good in it was borrowed from thence.

But I am under no necessity of settling the exact extent of the Gospel influence, nor the effect it has had upon the lives of those who embrace it: let Christendom be so small a part of the globe as Gordon has made it, and the Turks, the Chinese, the Tartars, the Iroquois, men of purer innocence and stricter probity than Christians. Those who think so are welcome to go live among them, provided they do not desire me to go with them; yet I never heard of any body doing so merely for the sake of better company, nor unless in some such hopes as that of getting a Jaghire, which when obtained they bring home to spend among wicked Christians. The discussion of those points is needless to my present purpose, for I am not examining the sources of temporal happiness and convenience in the several countries upon earth, but observing the divine economy with respect to the race of men in general, and by what

what gradations the tree of sound knowledge has been nourished up towards maturity.

It seems a thing probable in itself, though we gave no heed to Moses, that others before Abraham had believed the Unity, and absolute Government of God, that he dealt with men according to their behaviour, and was good to all without exception who trusted in him: so here were the seeds of Faith, and Hope, and Charity, sown some how or other in single persons, or perhaps among a few intimates of similar sentiments and characters. But Abraham first made those the tenets of a family, embraced by all the members of his numerous household indifferently, the servants as well as the master and children, the gross as well as the more discerning: so here was the beginning of a community united together in a general interest by the proper cement, a dependence upon one protector who had all things under command. In the infant simplicity of mankind it was necessary to keep this family as much as possible separate from all others, that the cohesion of its parts might not be weakened by external attraction: from hence proceeded the great care taken to provide Isaac and Jacob with orthodox wives, the expedience of which caution appears by the examples of Ishmael and

and Esau, who intermarrying among the Canaanites, became dismembered from their parent plant, and engrafted upon Idolatry.

When a family grew into a nation, the general interest was extended to larger numbers, the heart of individuals opened wider, and their charity diffused to all who were descendants from the same stock, subjects of the same law, and partakers in the same form of worship. Yet the grossness of early times being not worn off, it was still necessary to employ repulsion in the assistance of cohesion, and they were taught to exercise severities upon their neighbours, to entertain an utter aversion and contempt of all other nations, as a means of uniting them more heartily with one another: for we have observed in a former part of this chapter, there is nothing cements vulgar minds so strongly as animosity against a common enemy. By this aversion and contempt, together with the ceremonies instituted for keeping them in a compact body, they were preserved in the belief of one God, incorporeal, supreme over all, and the idea of a general interest among the brethren, consequent upon the former, and were the only people in whom the like belief prevailed: for how largely soever we may attribute to Philosophy, with respect to the compleatness of its doctrines,

there never yet was a people of Philosophers, nor ever will be, unless it can be compassed by means of the dispensation we are now speaking of.

Whether they believed a future state has been doubted; it is plain this was no part of their public creed, nor was any other immortality propounded to them than that of the prosperity and endurance of their nation: as they were a gross and heavy-minded people, little apt to make advances beyond what was expressly taught them, it seems most probable the generality never thought so far as of another world, therefore could neither be said to embrace nor reject it. But such among them as were men of reflection could not well miss of a conclusion so naturally following from the doctrine of one God, just and equitable, rewarder of every man according to his deeds, Lord of Hosts as well invisible as visible, Maker of heaven and earth, who breathed into man the breath of life; compared with the great inequality of fortunes among persons of the same character here upon earth: and at last, after a long course of ages, the expectation of another life grew pretty current among them; for the Pharisees, who were more numerous than both the other sects, believed a resurrection.

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By the coming of Jesus the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, the partition-wall broken down, a passage opened for the Gentiles to become the people of God, the ceremonial law abolished, righteousness preached to the poor, and the resurrection to eternal reward or punishment expressly taught as a popular doctrine. Therefore it may truly be said, that life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel, notwithstanding they might be known to a few persons of thought and reflection for some ages before: for when a man has written a book, and communicated it to two or three of his friends, we do not say it has seen the light, we never use that expression until he has published it to the world; in like manner, the perpetuity of the Soul, together with personal reward and punishment after death, may be said to have been first brought to light by that which drew it from the closets of the studious, and procured it to be received as an undoubted truth by the public.

And as the knowledge of God among the vulgar, so the bounds of charity were likewise enlarged: for all of every nation who would, were admitted within the pale of salvation, which united them all in one general interest, and the communion of saints was made an article of faith: so that the whole

society in heaven and earth became one entire body, actuated by the same spirit of concord under one Lord and one head. From the communion of interests naturally follows an equality of intrinsic value among the several members, so that he who brings a cobler into the way of salvation, does as good a deed as if he could bring a man of rank, learning, and accomplishment: unless as the latter has more ability to do the same for others, and then the preference is due to him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of those whom he may advantage. It must be owned there are some harsh expressions against the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, and such like, but these were given for the hardness of our hearts, that is, for persons in whom cohesion was still so weak as to need assistance from repulsion: but for such as have ears to hear, love to our neighbour is declared the second great commandment, and our neighbour explained to be any person, orthodox, heretic, or infidel, who stands in a situation to receive a kindness at our hands.

19. Thus we see by what careful nurture the tree of sound Theology has been raised among mankind; at first confined to narrow bounds, that it might strike strong root into the spot where it grew, and as it gathered strength to repel injuries from without, was made

made still to shoot out new branches, and extend the old ones over a wider compass of ground. And how the idea of a general interest was transferred from a few of similar temper to a whole family, from thence to a populous nation, to the professors of the same faith, to all mankind; and perhaps at length may spread to the universal host of perceptive beings: yet did this tree grow too fast for its strength, so that at the extremities it generated into a gross superstition, as bad as the idolatry it was intended to eradicate.

Then it was that God permitted Mahometism to grow from the corrupted roots, like a fungus from rotten wood, and give that excrescence a much larger course than ever the parent tree had reached to. Nor are we to think that hereby he undid his own work, but rather pruned it: for as we have remarked in the foregoing pages, that Heathenism makes one little advance in the progress towards true Religion, among those who were totally immersed in sensible objects, without suspicion of any superior power over them, so is Mahometism something of an advance to Heathens, and such Christians among whom their Religion had been so debased by mixtures of sorcery, conjuration, and the grossest image worship, as to bring it down to the level of paganism. For wherever the standard of Mahomet

Mahomet has prevailed, it has carried with it the belief of one God, incorporeal, invisible, supreme Governor of heaven and earth, not to be bribed with oblations and sacrifices, the sure protector and rewarder of such as serve him faithfully, the practice of many moral duties, the doctrine of future reward and punishment, and communion of interests among those who join in the right way of worship. These are important and fundamental articles, which perhaps could not have been otherwise established among ignorant or depraved people, incapable of receiving or retaining the doctrines of a better system. Even the Chinese, with all the boasted wisdom of their Literati, were never able to make them popular tenets without its assistance. So that the dispensation we have traced down from the Father of the Faithful, has already, either in its purity or its corruption, had an influence, according to Gordon's reckoning, over three-fourths of the globe.

You see how in tracing this clue I keep clear of all that wrangling and witticism wherewith the prophecies and miracles have been pelted by freethinkers; for I may consent that the prophecies shall have been judiciously and honestly, or enthusiastically and craftily interpreted, the miracles genuine and real, or typical, allegorical, and counterfeit,

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as you please; still in either case the historical fact cannot be denied, that things have happened in the manner above related. But whatever has happened must have had certain adequate causes occasioning it to fall out in that manner, and whatever causes have operated, must have lain in a train derived originally from the action of the Almighty, the Disposer of all events, as well among the courses of Nature as the occurrences befalling mankind; but the event we have been speaking of is too important and beneficial for us to scruple assigning it to the particular designation of his Providence. For all things must necessarily flow from the First Cause by some channel or other, and if divines could shew there were not natural causes in being sufficient to produce the effects taken notice of above, this would at once establish the credit of the supernatural.

20. But perhaps it will not be allowed, the Fungus can give nourishment to any body, because it would be poisonous to us who have been used to purer diet. And indeed it must be owned the few salubrious juices it has imbibed from the parent root, have been vitiated by many heterogeneous mixtures; such as the duty of religious wars, the sensuality of future rewards, the allowableness of polygamy, concubinage, making mutes, castrations,

castrations, and impurities I dare not defile my paper by naming: which though sometimes practised among Christians, were never yet esteemed a part of their Religion, nor countenanced thereby. Therefore, to be liberal in our argument, let us give up the benefits of Mahometism, and confine ourselves to the professors of Christianity, who though you reduce them to as narrow a compass as you can, will still be found more numerous than the Jews, and to have several additional branches in their tree of knowledge which had not sprouted forth among them.

For take the most illiterate person among us and he will tell you there is one God, eternal, almighty, spiritual, holy, infinitely wise and good, Creator as well as Maker and Governor of all things in heaven and earth; that tempests lay waste, earthquakes overturn, lightnings strike, diseases destroy, fires consume, accidents befal, where he commands, and forbear where he withholds; that his providence is ever wakeful, not only over nations and kingdoms, but over every particular person, so that no good or evil comes upon us without his knowledge and permission or appointment; that he continually observes our actions, remarks our words, and sees into our most secret thoughts; that what discretion

discretion and good dispositions we have, and vigour of mind to act according to them, were owing to him as well as our powers and our knowledge, for he giveth us both to will and to do; nevertheless, this does not destroy the justice of reward and punishment, wherefore it behoves us to be careful of our conduct, for that he will raise us up to immortality wherein our condition shall be affected by every deed, and word, and thought, passing with us upon earth; that there is a communion of Saints, and fellowship between them and the Angels; that the Church militant and triumphant together compose one body under one head, having a connection of interests throughout the whole, that advancing the glory of God by doing good to his universal Church or any member thereof, according to our powers and opportunities, is our first duty and foundation of all the rest; that whatever is done to the least among our brethren, be it no more than giving a cup of cold water, will not pass without its reward; that we owe a love to enemies and persecutors, to strangers, aliens, and infidels, and ought to abstain from all wanton cruelties and needless hurts, even to brutes and insects.

It will be asked, Do Christians regard all those things? I am afraid but too little: yet are they parts of all their Creed, for the meanest

meanest among them will acknowledge their truth whenever put in mind of it, though the words coming in at one ear commonly pass out again at the other the moment after their sound is over. Well, but do not the freethinkers hold the same articles too? That I cannot tell: I have heard some of them stickle mainly for the absolute contingency of human action, the self-sufficiency of the will to do good or evil, the intrinsic personal difference between man and man, underived from any cause or antecedent provision of the Almighty, the limitations upon his power by the uncreated nature of things, his inability to make a bigot or a superstitious person happy. However, I hope they do hold most of the tenets before mentioned: but whence got they the knowledge of them? not from discoveries made by their own sagacity, I may venture to say: nor I believe from the remains of ancient philosophy, for some of them are not to be found there. They were once under the nurse and the school-master, who it is well known have been used to inculcate such things, to whom therefore it may be presumed the principles they retain of theirs were owing, notwithstanding they affect to hold them in such utter contempt.

21. Since then we see that God has been pleased, by an extraordinary series of events, continuing

continuing from the infancy of mankind, to nourish up a Religion whereby purer sentiments of himself and a more extensive charity are introduced among the vulgar, than has ever been done any other way, why should we scruple to avail ourselves of the benefits to be drawn therefrom, as well as any thing we can gather from the contemplation of Nature? for both are his work, and both deserve our various attention upon that account. The course of affairs respecting the moral world proceeds, equally with the courses of nature, from the Will and eternal purpose, the Word or Covenant of God, styled in Pythagorean language the Oath of Jove; therefore we do not reverence the Oath while we continue to treat either branch of it lightly: and experience of former times may convince us, how expedient it is to employ both for supporting and strengthening one another.

Philosophy has never been able, notwithstanding many attempts by schools and lectures, by wise sayings, fables, and allegories, to spread her treasures among the multitude, nor gain authority enough to make her tenets received. Neither could she furnish her adepts with all the just sentiments of God and principles urging to extensive charity which are to be found in a common Christian,

tian, whose system contains sounder notions even of natural Religion, more profitable to the mind than they were acquainted with; as may appear on comparing of § 13, with the last section. Neither could she prevent them, longer than from Pythagoras to the immediate scholars of Socrates, from debasing her sublimest ideas by intermixtures of many idle questions, concerning the existence of species, forms, and qualities, distinct from the subjects possessing them, the evidence of the senses, the evil of pain, the summum bonum, the mystic powers of certain numbers, divination, prodigies, auguries, oracles, and such like.

On the other hand, experience testifies what wild work has been made with Religion when once men begin to cry down the use of reason. Whenever headlong zeal and implicit faith gain the ascendant, it becomes an engine of craft, ambition, and spiritual tyranny, a bundle of superstitious and gross absurdities; instead of peace and love, and heartfelt solace it was intended to produce, it changes into a perpetual source of terror, censoriousness, and ill-humour, a fireband of war, animosity, and persecution; it gives admission to troops of witches, fairies, spectres, apparitions, dreams, prognostics, and the idlest follies of paganism; its sacred records are

are made to receive a mystic interpretation according to the rules of the Cabbala, if that can be called an interpretation which renders them unintelligible or contradictory to common sense; the few forms and ceremonies belonging to it, calculated upon the sensitivo-rational constitution of human nature, turned into a kind of magic operation by charm and conjuration, and this operation strenuously contended for sometimes by men of great learning and honest intentions. This being the case both of Religion and Philosophy when esteemed enemies to one another, discretion will incline us to endeavour an union and partnership between them, that we may draw our advantages from both; taking hints from one for making improvements in the other, and employing the means furnished by one for giving currency to the other.

Nor can we offend against either by this manner of proceeding, for the Gospel was preached to the poor, the sentiments inculcated there were calculated for general use, many things delivered in parables to be heard only by him that hath ears to hear, instructions given, that were capable of various interpretations; as if on purpose to put us upon exerting our sagacity and judgment in discovering their genuine sense by help of our natural lights. Refined speculations, profitable only for

for particular persons not reckoned among the poor, are left to the investigations of human reason, which we may presume sufficient for the task: therefore as there are no directions given for her assistance therein, so neither are there any prohibitions against taking her course. For though St. Paul warns to beware of the vain babblings of Philosophy, it does not follow from thence, that he would condemn all attention to Philosophy whenever she talks pertinently: for this would be making him as inconsiderate as the freethinker, who runs down Religion itself because he has just reason to beware of the vain superstitions in Religion.

But Religion is not always superstitious, nor Philosophy always a babbler, as we may gather from what the same St. Paul tells us concerning the Gentiles, among whom I know of nothing better they had than Philosophy: for he says, God did not leave them without a witness of himself, for the invisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation, being made manifest in his works. And surely a scene wherein the eternal power and Godhead are displayed, is not unworthy the contemplation even of such as may have other displays of the same. For as we are told that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word

word which cometh out of the mouth of God: so are we warranted to say upon experience of facts, that the spiritual life is not sustained by the written word alone, but in conjunction with that other word, proceeding from the same mouth, exhibited upon the face of nature in characters legible by human understanding.

22. Then if we regard the interest of Philosophy, and the interest of mankind, there is no cause to fear they should receive damage by joining Religion to co-operate with reason. The best policied and most flourishing states have been remarkable for their attachment to the forms of belief and modes of worship established among them, and in proportion as these lost their credit, they fell into confusion and decay. This we may learn from historians, particularly Polybius, one of the most judicious and clearest from superstition among them, who attributes the then disjointed condition of the Greeks to their contempt for the sacredness of an oath: and Cicero, in his treatise upon the law ascribes the vigour of the Roman commonwealth to their veneration for auguries, and other public or family ceremonies received from their ancestors. If we would take example from the Philosophers, we shall find that Pythagoras, Socrates, and others of the soundest,

soundest, were no ridiculers of established doctrines or forms of worship, but strove to turn them to profitable uses, and lead men by popular opinions into such sentiments of philosophy as they were capable of receiving: and often endeavoured by Mythology to allegorize the Gods into the powers of Nature, affections of the mind and moral virtues; of which we have give specimens in Eros and Eris, the Thalassian and Uranian Venus.

How then do we imagine Pythagoras or Socrates would behave were they now to rise up amongst us? would they undertake to prove Christianity not mysterious, or as old as the creation, or to undermine the grounds and reasons of literal prophecy? would they perpetually affright men with the dangers of priestcraft, affect, to ridicule every thing esteemed sacred, puzzle the ignorant with their archness, or unsettle the minds of the vulgar with their witticisms? Pythagoras you may think was a solemn old don, and so might not care to deal in joking for want of a talent that way: for it is a favorite position with our moderns, that every man loves a joke, even in argumentation, if he be able to make one; and they quote Elijah for a precedent, who joked upon the four hundred priests of Baal. Nevertheless, Socrates was

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an exception to this rule, for you must allow him a man of as much wit and humour as ever lived; yet he knew how to be merry and wise, when to be witty and when to forbear, nor ever suffered his humour to outrun his discretion, but attended to the check of his Demon upon every present impulse.

Therefore he never attempted to bring the priests or their oracles into contempt, to discredit the Eleusinian mysteries, nor abuse the Gods or their images. Neither did he strive to unsettle any body in their notions, unless when standing in the way of something more solid he wanted to introduce: for he always had regard to the Cui bono, the consequences to the party or the public, and aimed not so much to teach, as to put his scholar in a way how to find out for himself. So he was not positive nor dogmatical, nor fond of that expression so much affected now a days by some folks, I will venture to say, for he never ventured to say any thing except one, which was, that he knew nothing, but only professed to practise his mother's art of midwifery by delivering other persons he saw labouring with thoughts that could not find an issue: his method was to start doubts and objections innumerable, not with design to leave things in uncertainty, but in order that by the workings of them in the

mind, the hearer might be delivered of something steady, certain, and salutary. How then can we better imitate him than by seeking a rational construction of all the popular doctrines, which when found may justly be presumed the genuine sense intended to be conveyed by the teacher? for this is no more than every private man is intitled to, that his words should be understood in the best sense they are capable of bearing.

And we have the better encouragement to this method of proceeding, because the materials we have to work upon are more easily susceptible of a useful interpretation, than any vulgar opinions Socrates had to do with. How many excellent discourses have we on morality, so interlarded with texts as to contain little else beside the threads of connection joining them into a regular piece? but who could do the like with any system of opinions current among the vulgar in Greece or Rome? who could make an instructive, moral discourse with quotations out of Ovid's Metamorphoses, which I know not whether it may not be regarded as the Bible of Paganism? Perhaps some very good reflections might be picked up from thence here and there; but every part of our Bible has been made use of at sometime or other, to enforce the moral duties and principles of natural Religion:

ligion: even the marvellous parts have been serviceably applied that way, but what could you do with the marvellous in Ovid?

23. As to what there is of form and discipline, deference to authority, and peculiar articles of Faith distinct from those of sound Philosophy, for they may be distinct without being opposite or hurtful thereto, it will become us to study carefully their several uses and natural tendency, as a physician would his materia medica; and likewise the condition of human nature, and characters of our cotemporaries, as he does the constitution of his patient, in order to see to what sevices they may be profitably applied, and what dangers of misapplication are to be guarded against. If we perceive any turning them into unintelligible mysteries, or ascribing to them an intrinsic value and efficacy, or conceiving them to operate in the way of magic, charm, and conjuration, it would be a good deed to prevent it as there is opportunity; still having a regard to what is feasible as well as what is right in theory, and not persisting madly to kick against the pricks.

But we must not be too rigorous in this point, for neither the illiterate nor learned vulgar can always trace the connection between causes and effects a little remote, nor discern the uses and natural consequences of

things recommended upon good authority, yet they will imagine a reason where they see none; in which case they unavoidably mingle a spice of charm and conjuration in their system: this it will be prudent to remove gently by such management as they have calmness and capacity to bear. But we must not expect to remove it entirely, nor is it always necessary we should; for there are some minds which cannot do without it, and to such it will not be hurtful.

I have observed in a former place that superstition is relative, the same conceptions being innocent and profitable to one man, which would be superstitious in another: how gross soever they be, yet if they are the purest he can entertain upon the subject, they are the properest for him. There are some rules and observances very useful for such as cannot discern their uses; the main point is to gain a reception of them, by pointing out their expedience where we can make it understood, where we cannot, by any other method feasible. Therefore the weakly, pious, or learned man, who persuades himself that God has infused a magical virtue into certain ceremonies and compositions of matter, is less hurtful either to himself or to the public, than the freethinker, who shrewdly finding out there can be no intrinsic value in them,

them, denies them any value at all, because he has not calmness or sagacity enough to trace out their expedience.

If I might be permitted to propose a medium, I would recommend that whatever we apprehend commanded by God, which we should otherwise have thought useless and trifling should be received in the same idea as we do the recipes of a physician: we do not imagine him putting a virtue and efficacy into his drugs they had not before, but skilful to know their qualities, and discerning them to be proper for our constitution and present condition of body; so we take them down as the very things we should have chosen for ourselves, had we as much skill as he. In like manner I apprehend there is nothing irreligious in supposing that God never gives an arbitrary command which has not a prudential foundation in his constitutions of Nature and Providence, nor annexes a virtue and efficacy to things insignificant: but that he knows perfectly the condition of his creatures, what opinions and practices will naturally conduce to our good, and graciously points them out to us where we could not have discovered them: therefore we are to reverence his Wisdom without gainsaying, believing the things enjoined thereby are the very same we should have chosen in prudence

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of our own accord, had we a full and accurate knowledge of the circumstances we stand in, and how every thing would affect us.

And the like presumption may justly prevail in a lower degree with respect to the institutions established by men, which may have a real use founded in human nature though it may not be readily explained to every ingenious well-bred gentleman, who demands it at a coffee-house.

By taking things in this light, we shall escape an obstinacy of zeal for old forms, and leave an opening for reformation when they appear manifestly to have an evil tendency: for then we may conclude the command has been misinterpreted, or that it was occasional and temporary, losing its expedience and obligation upon a change in the characters of mankind, in which case it would be as absurd to adhere to it inflexibly, as to continue the regimen prescribed for a fever, when one afterwards falls into a dropsical or paralytic disorder.

24. Some degree of attention to rule and discipline will do hurt to no man, for we have all more or less a mixture of the Angel and of the brute: therefore we must use some management with the brutal faculty, that it may stand ready to assist in the services of reason,

reason, or even to do her work at intervals while she lies asleep. I have endeavoured in a former place to show of how great importance it is to have a well-disciplined imagination, for that is the seat of the habits, the moral senses and the virtues, which must impel spontaneously to action before they can be pronounced compleat: nor do the most salutary convictions of the understanding become a saving Faith, until they have made a lodgment there. But form and custom and ceremony have a great effect upon the imagination to rivet persuasions and sentiments, and may be serviceably employed in rendering speculation practical.

Men of strong reason and much thought may have occasion for less of them than others, yet do they not deserve to be totally neglected even by such, who may find their account in a judicious choice and application of them. However it must be owned that the bulk of mankind, partly by want of capacity, partly by continual engagement to their professions and ways of life, are necessitated to take direction from the inferior faculty: if they use their reason, it is for making application of their rules and principles to particular cases, but the rules and principles themselves they must take from authority and custom: they believe a thing because

because they never heard it controverted, they follow a measure of conduct because they find it practised by every body of character, having something else to do than pursue the line of expedience up to the original source through all its long and intricate channels. Therefore, if any man thinks he can manage well enough for himself without aid of authority or received customs, still it is an unpardonable selfishness to take no thought for others around him.

But there is a narrowness of Soul too frequently prevailing as well among your great reasoners as your very pious people, which makes them fond of contracting the pale of Salvation, and forward to entertain a contempt and utter neglect of all except a few choice spirits of their own turn. Whereas sound Philophy and sound Religion recommend a generous universally charitable temper as the most desirable possession and principal characteristic of their professors, and teach that in the most ignorant, despicable, low-minded human creature there lies an immortal Soul capable of happiness in another state, equally with the best bred, the most accomplished or refined. Whoever therefore would approve himself a true Philosopher, as well as he that desires to be a truly religious man, ought to consider his honest neighbours,

neighbours, though not speculatists, and the vulgar, no less than himself; and contribute by his words and example to uphold the sacredness of those forms and principles which may be serviceable to them, though such as he esteems needless and unavailing for his own uses.

Nevertheless, if we could persuade ourselves it were allowable to regard the interests of Philosophy alone, yet are they so liable to be affected by opinions of common currency, that it were prudent to take some care of the latter for sake of the former: for no man ever struck out his own system from the beginning entirely by his own single efforts, but took his rise from some beaten ground already prepared for his use, therefore it is of the utmost consequence what ground he has to take his rise from. The young Philosopher, before he has the benefit of his own judgment, is equipped for his future progress by his parents, his tutors, and the company he happens to fall in amongst: they lead him into acuteness of observation and sound manner of judging upon ordinary things, the idea of an invisible power, the regard to futurity, the laudableness of application with which he makes his subsequent discoveries: according to the principles they instil into him or the few superstitions, sensual tastes, and gross conceptions

conceptions they inculcate, he has the less to do afterwards, either to engraft or to eradicate, and the clearer passage before him for making farther improvements.

Nor is it practicable to throw off all tincture of the nursery, the school, or the dining room; those who think they have done it most effectually still retain a spice; for it is from thence they annex the ideas of charm and magic to certain forms and ceremonies not joined therewith by the ablest doctors of our Church; from thence they drew all they have positive in Religion, for their peculiar doctrines are barely negative, not to believe a miracle, not to admit a prophecy, not to mind a priest, not to submit to any discipline. They are mighty assiduous in teaching men what they should not do, but nothing of what they should do, unless perhaps to deal with honour in your transactions, to be well-behaved, and to see with your own eyes; and those I suppose the nurse and the priest had bid them be careful of before: if they add any thing of their own, it is no more than an extension of the last rule, to see with your own eyes for discerning things that lie out of your sight. Neither when we come from under tuition to act and think for ourselves, can we totally escape the influence of sympathy, but the sentiments and imaginations

nations of the company we consost with will imperceptibly insinuate among our own.

To these causes it must be owning that no great lengths of knowledge are ever run by any persons in barbarous countries, but the greatest proficiency has always been made in the most civilized and best-principled nations; for there is no such difference in soils and lineages as that one may produce science but another not: we live in the same climate inhabited by the painted Britains, who when transported to Rome, were found fit only for hewers of wood and drawers of water; and are descended from them mingled with Saxons, Danes, Normans, and Jutlanders, who knew no better Gods than Thor and Woden, nor other science than war and destruction. Science began to show a few signs of life upon the introduction of Christianity among our ancestors, obscured as it was by Popish superstitions, which rendered it no light but rather darkness visible; then the jargon of school divinity and Aristotle misunderstood occupied the thoughts of the studious. As early as Edward III. there were persons who saw through this veil of darkness, yet could they do little more than discover that it was a veil: but from the Reformation, learning of all kinds, both human and divine, has made a surprizing progress, and

and I hope it is still gaining ground in the long journey towards perfection. In like manner if we were to search all history, I imagine it would be found that the degree of purity in Religion and soundness in judgment among the speculative has ever borne a proportion to that among the generality, both rising and falling together, because mutually affecting one another.

25. This being the case it becomes a matter of moment to the most refined what qualified neighbours they have to live amongst; which consideration alone, if there were none more weighty, might incline us to wish them as just sentiments in Religion and morality as they are capable, or willing to entertain: but these things can never be made to prevail generally without aid of forms, ceremonies, customs, and articles received upon authority.

After the freedoms I have used and pains I have taken throughout the foregoing work to view every thing in the light of nature, I cannot well be suspected of a fondness for the magical, the marvellous, and mysterious: I am rather apprehensive of having given offence by endeavouring to lessen the mysteries of some points, which were thought to abound in them most copiously. And yet I declare that if I had the tuition of a porter,

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or even of an honest, sensible fox-hunter disposed to listen to me attentively for seven years, I could not undertake to work in him the persuasions I think it highly expedient for him to entertain, upon the grounds whereon I build them for myself: therefore esteem it very happy there is a code in credit, for which the sentiments one would wish to infuse, do so naturally follow.

What could have been done with the pagan Theology or the Mahometan Koran? we must have worked hard with the transmuting process, and allegorized them into a doctrine never thought of by the compilers: whereas now we need only clear away the perversities and mystic obscurities, that have overgrown in length of time, and develop the genuine sense intended to be conveyed on the delivery, to produce a regular consistent system, agreeable to nature and reason.

The long and intricate deductions of science, worked up with the slender threads of distinction, will never do for common use: the man of business has not time for such piddling work, the polished gentleman is above such dry and musty investigations; so he must take something upon trust from those plodding fellows who have no better taste than for toil and drudgery. It is necessary to shorten the line for his use, by bringing the

two

two ends together without troubling him with the whole length: in which case there is a great chance but he will annex some idea of charm or magic virtue, because an efficacy seems to jump at once from the cause to a remote effect, wherewith it has no apparent nor immediate connection.

Nor is he singular in these imaginations, for one may observe the like in the profound and the speculative: how currently do we talk of Nature and Chance, and think we clearly understand these terms because they are in every body's mouth! Some who would be thought the deepest reasoners, have made them First Causes, and the soundest of very early Philosophers, though they admitted a God, seem to have supposed him an offspring of Nature, or at least that the materials he had to work upon were of her property. But what is Chance considered as a first mover, or Nature as an original sustainer of existence? They are no substances, they are no Beings, they are powers without an agent, qualities without a subject: an idea as inexplicable to the full as any virtues supposed inherent in sacred rites; why then should we think one a more absurd and ridiculous notion, or more pernicious to be entertained than the other, so as to set ourselves to eradicate it at all events?

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I would not take pains to persuade any body that God has annexed an extraordinary virtue or efficacy to any form, ceremony, place, day, or assent to some speculative proposition, which he had not given them in his original constitution of nature and plan of providence respecting the moral world, for to inculcate such persuasion would be dealing insincerely: I would endeavour to study human nature, particularly the sensitive faculty, seat of the apprehensions habits; and affections; observe carefully their remotest tendencies and influence upon one another, and what opinions or practices might be applied most for the benefit of mankind, as bringing them nearest to a just sentiment of God, a satisfaction of mind within themselves, and a mutual charity among one another. Whatever I judged most conducive to those purposes, all circumstances considered, I would recommend, or join in my vote with those who had already recommended it; explaining my own idea by the chain of natural consequences where I could, for I should always wish to do as much by reason as possible; but where I found this impracticable, then having recourse to authority or general estimation enforcing it as matter of duty, the due performance whereof will draw down the blessing of

of God. If any body of his own accord will annex the idea of a supernatural virtue or efficacy, I should be cautious of contradicting him, while there was a hazard that he might thereby lose the idea of any duty or adviseableness at all: for I am for leaving every one to his own notions, unless upon a probability of exchanging them for better. To do otherwise, though too commonly practised, seems to me as inconsiderate, as if upon seeing your neighbour live in an ill-built incommodious house, you should beat it about his ears, without supplying him with materials, or furnishing him a plan to build another.

26. Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, how God, by the provisions of his Wisdom, has raised up the two trees of knowledge, Philosophy, and Religion, from little seeds, by slow and successive gradations, and how apt they are, by their mutual influence to purify and meliorate each other: for when set at too great distance apart, Philosophy becomes a vain babbler, and Religion a superstitious enchantress. Therefore it is highly expedient to approximate them as near as possible, that they may engraft into each other by approach: for their juices will mellow by mingling together, their branches grow more vigorous over a larger compass of ground,

ground, and bear salubrious fruits of more general use, as being suited for nourishment both of the sensitive and rational faculties.

And our Religion itself seems to point out this method; for it teaches that Man was created perfect, his rational faculties being sufficient for his conduct, that the purpose of the Redemption was to restore him to the condition from whence he had fallen, that is, the perfect enjoyment of those faculties, for I suppose it will not be denied that the blessed Saints above possess them as compleatly as Adam did, nor that they hold their happiness by the tenure of their obedience. Redemption being the free Grace of God, there is no doubt he could have instated his elect in the full benefits purchased thereby immediately, but he has thought proper to lead them thereinto by a long preparation through the trials and temptations of this world; but what better preparation can they make, than by labouring to raise their rational faculties towards the perfection wherein they were given at the creation, and employing the means and methods prescribed to bring the sensitive under entire command of the others.

During the patriarchal times, the frequent converse of Angels was vouchsafed, but no longer; in the course of the Levitical law, interpretations of dreams, answers by Urim

and Thummim, instructions by prophecy, and supernatural appearances gradually ceased; there being still less and less need of application to the senses in proportion as reason gathered strength. Upon the particular occasion of introducing the Gospel, it was necessary that miracles should be revived, but the continuance of them after the Apostles seems a very doubtful fact: the multitude of ceremonies and sacrifices was then abolished, institutions and ordinances reduced to a very few, many things delivered in parables and dark sayings, requiring a careful application of the judgment to understand; nor was it expected they should presently work their full effect upon mankind, but promise was given of the Comforter, who should shew us all things.

This Comforter then we have among us: from his shewing we learn what things of God we know, and by his power are enabled to perform the good things we do. But in what manner does he come? not with signs and wonders, nor by visible descent, nor yet in visions, ecstasies, sudden illuminations, or preternatural feelings: for these are only the waking dreams of enthusiasts; but by working imperceptibly upon our mental organs at a time we know nothing of, perhaps hours or days, or months, anterior to any sensible

effect: so the light he sheds seems to us the discoveries of our own understanding, and the power he infuses appears the exerted effort of our natural strength; nor should we know he had been aiding, otherwise than by the sacred text assuring us that no good thing can be done without him. Therefore when our conscience testifies that we have done a good thing, we may be confident of having had his assistance to invigorate our natural powers, but can never know nor perceive when the touch was given by which they were so invigorated.

Such then being his method of operation, it is our business to endeavour the best improvement of our understanding, and best use of our natural powers, trusting to God to afford us his supernatural assistance when and in what manner he judges proper; but making a judicious application of those means and methods of grace suggested to us, and employing our reason to search for lights in whatever quarter they may be found. For we have now ground to hope, that he will sanctify our Philosophy, provided we take care to restrain it from wandering in idle curiosities, but direct all its winding researches with an ultimate view to advancing that great work of God, the introduction of a sound Faith, a well-grounded Hope, and a

hearty universal Charity, among mankind. But we must not expect to perform great matters in a work which is to be the work of thousands in successive generations, each contributing a small share towards the whole; let us then be content to do our best, and we shall not prove deficient: if God had wanted more at our hands, he would have given us larger talents, or greater effusions of his grace; but we are none of us useless in the spot where he has stationed us, every man may make some little addition to those virtues, either among the public, or the few he converses with, or at least in his own mind; and for what little he can do, may trust Providence that it will operate its full proportion towards compleating the grand design.

27. For a grand design appears to have been carrying on from the earliest accounts of history, by a remarkable course of providence, calculated for the benefit of the human race in general, distinct from that respecting particular persons, and the intention of it to be for introducing a perfect rectitude of sentiment, as well in the understanding as the inferior faculties among mankind: for if this could be effected any where, it would make large strides towards extending itself every where. We read that God in discourse with Abraham declared, if he should find ten

righteous

righteous men in Sodom, he would spare the city for the ten righteous' sake: now the rationalist cannot conceive that the All-perfect should act by favour and affection, so as to change the measures his Justice required of him, in consideration of a few persons who had made themselves acceptable in his sight; but that whatever it may be said in popular language God will do, might be said in philosophic language he has actually done, for that there are natural causes already laid in train by the disposition of his providence for bringing it to pass. Therefore he may understand by this text that the exhortations, example, and management of ten perfectly righteous persons would have such an influence upon the conduct of a wicked city, as to render them no objects of divine judgment; and so they would be spared, not by any change in the purposes of God, but by a change in their own characters.

Nor can we say, that experience contradicts this exposition, for we never yet have had trial of the case: those we call good men having always some mixture of error or frailty in their composition, and it is well known that one little infirmity will stop the good effects of many virtues. There never was heard of more than one perfect man upon earth, who was made so by union of the divine nature with

with the human, and his perfection went no farther than himself: for of his chosen disciples one proved a traitor and reprobate, nor were the rest without their misapprehensions and their failings. He preached only to the poor, and his doctrines were afterwards propagated in such manner, as to seem foolishness to the wise of this world; neither were they so compleat as not to need the continual assistance of the Comforter for shewing those things which could not be learned from them by human sagacity. Yet we cannot suppose them so incompleat, as not fully to answer the purpose intended: from hence and from the event we may conclude, that God still intended to carry on his work by the provisions of Wisdom rather than the operations of Power, and the purpose of this greatest of all interpositions was not to introduce perfection into the world immediately, but only to sow the Seeds of it, which the working of natural causes, assisted by occasional waterings of the Holy Spirit, might bring up in long process of time to full maturity.

Therefore we must look to the courses of Providence regulating the laws of nature, the actions of free agents, and opportune succession of fortuitous events, for establishing the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Neither Religion nor Philosophy can do it without taking

taking assistance from common prudence and discretion in the ordinary transactions of life, without a thorough knowledge of human nature, of the characters and conceptions of men, whereby the measures of conduct for all situations and occasions, tempers, and capacities, may be regularly deduced from the one principle, the Glory of God, or general interest of the creatures: for to make a kingdom perfect, the laws whereby it is governed must be suited to the condition of every member, and exigency of every occasion. But we are too little acquainted either with ourselves or one another, ever to lay out a plan of our whole conduct upon that one bottom, or even to frame a partial plan, that may be alike practicable and serviceable to others as to ourselves: so that appetite, habit, and bodily wants are continually making work for themselves, because having none, or none that they can do, assigned them in our system.

The Divine or pious Christian may find enough in his oracles to conduct him safely in the way to his own salvation; the Philosopher may think his science sufficient to lead him in the certain road to his future happiness; but the one can never expect to attain an unsinning obedience, nor the other to become a consummate Wise-man: the scheme

scheme of opinion and practice drawn by either, though perhaps the best that human infirmity can make it, for his own private use, might prove inconvenient and inexpedient for others; and will probably be too refined and mental for the man of business, the man of taste, the merchant, the mechanic, and the labourer; for every man has something peculiar in his notions, and his needs, which he will strongly recommend as obligatory to his neighbour, and thereby spoil all the good effects he might have worked by his communicable ideas. For we are too hasty in taking up a persuasion that things are good in themselves because we have found benefit by them, without ever considering what they are good for, to whom they are good, and in what cases they are applicable.

But we have a duty arising, as well from the relation we bear to the community, as to our Maker, and the things external from whence we receive our pleasures and pains; therefore are not perfectly righteous until we become good neighbours as well as good men, nor is it enough to strike out a compleat system of sentiment and action that shall comprehend, not only our exercises of Religion and virtue, but likewise our common employments, our recreations, and amuse-

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ments, in such manner as to be practicable; until we have gotten the art of modeling it into various forms accommodated to the several uses of persons we converse with, respectively practicable by each of them, and yielding him as much benefit as in his circumstances he is capable of receiving. This art is so far from having ever yet been discovered, that no doubt it will appear a romantic imagination, like the Philosopher's stone; but it is not uncommon that things extremely difficult in the invention become as easy to be followed when the method is once hit upon.

There seems then to be no difficulty in apprehending, that ten righteous persons qualified as above, if ten such there shall ever be, may assimilate their whole city to themselves, from thence the likeness would spread by a quicker progress over the nation, from the nation to others in alliance therewith, and by their means throughout all mankind. Then it might be said that original sin was wiped away from the earth, and human nature restored to her primitive perfection wherein she came forth from the hands of her Maker; for while needing to be supported in what little good we do by obligatory institutions and supernatural aids, it is not human nature but her assistant powers, that

that do the work: and from the dispensations of Providence, ordinary and extraordinary, taken notice of in the foregoing pages of this Chapter, may be gathered that their tendency and scope is to raise human nature to its full perfection.

Whenever this shall happen compleat, then will be the Millennium, peopled entirely by Saints; which, whether it shall begin in a year marked in our Calendar with a figure of six, or shall last precisely one thousand years, or whether there shall be any deaths therein, or those which happen be looked upon as acceptable translations to a higher state, like the gentle passage through sleep to morning, vigour, and freshness, need not be enquired: if any body has a mind to make calculations, let him build upon the degree of purity in sentiment and rectitude of conduct he can find any where; for this is more likely ground to go upon than any he can find in the Apocalypse. Though by the way I cannot help wondering how any orthodox person can satisfy himself in presuming to enter upon the discovery of an event whereof it is expressly declared, that no man knoweth the day; no, not the Son, but the Father. In the mean time let us not spend ourselves solely in unavailing prayers of, Lord Jesus, come quickly, but take the spade into our hands

hands and exert our abilities, be they no more than can remove a single mole-hill, to plane the way for his passage. Nor yet need we expect him literally to descend in person, for he cannot be supposed fond of a throne for the grandeur of it: and a monarch will not be wanted for such subjects, disposed to keep order among themselves, as members of one commonwealth, or rather one family, without private views or discordance of sentiment, but united together in brotherly love and unabating charity.

28. From the foregoing sketch of the Divine Economy may be gathered, that there is a general interest of the human species distinct from that of particulars; as in every country there is a national interest, distinct from that of the several members whereof the nation consists. But the public interest ought always to carry the preference before private, therefore the most righteous governors do not scruple measures that lay a hardship upon particular persons, if necessary for the public good: the subjects are pressed into land and sea service, many fortunes are hazarded, many lives are sacrificed, heavy taxes imposed, to gain possession of an uncultivated territory, from whose returns multitudes of those who have borne the burden will never live to receive a compensation. And all these things

things are laudable, as well in him that undertakes the service, as in him that enjoins it, while done upon reasonable prospect of a real distant advantage to the nation: for every private man owes his life and fortune to the necessary demands of his country, and the advancement of a public benefit is the proper object of a good politician.

In like manner we find that in the perfect polity of Heaven, the general interest is regarded above all other considerations, and sometimes pursued by the private damage of individuals. We are commanded to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, to bear injuries patiently, to turn the left cheek to him that has smitten the right, to hate father and mother, wife and children, to part with lands and houses, to lay down life itself, thus to break through natural affection and the natural love of self-preservation, for the Gospel's sake. For Christ, who could have no interest of his own to serve, therefore to whom love could only be shewn by doing good to his universal Church, declares that whoever loveth not him above all things is not worthy of him.

Nor will heathen Philosophy justify her votaries in pursuing their particular advantage before the general: Pythagoras and Socrates, perhaps the two greatest apostles

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of human reason that ever lived, suffered martyrdom in her service; their followers professed the same doctrine; even those of them who acted upon private views, never durst avow them: which shews that upon this subject Philosophy has always spoken the same language with Religion. And our moral senses prompt the like way, as appears by that applause which rises spontaneously in every one's breast upon hearing the histories of Regulus or Decius, or other ancient and modern heroes, who have generously sacrificed their lives and fortunes to the public good. But if men were never to act against the impulse of selfishness, still they could not help being serviceable to others by the accidents befalling them: one man's misfortune may give warning to many to escape the danger; experience gained by observations upon his distemper, may point out a remedy for others; and while the enemy is busied in ravaging a frontier, the interior parts may gain time to put themselves in a posture of defence.

The courses of Providence appear calculated for the general advantage without regard to individuals, to whom they prove often unavailing, and sometimes detrimental: the storms that purify the air and keep the ocean from stagnating, occasion many wrecks by

sea,

sea, and devastations upon land; vicissitudes of weather necessary to produce the fruits of the earth, tear in pieces many crazy constitutions; military, seafaring, and other occupations, without which our lives could not be preserved in safety, nor the accommodations of them procured, subject those who follow them to distresses, diseases, dangers, and frequent destructions; nor do we find entrance into the world without the pains and perils of those who bore us: not a civilized nation upon earth whose constitution and polity did not grow out of wars, conquests, tyrannies, confusions, desolations, and miseries among their ancestors. Even Religion in its progress has given birth to gross superstition, intolerable terrors and anxieties, to craft, oppressions, and persecutions: and Philosophy tended to confound the understandings of men, turning them aside from every thing useful to follow vain curiosities, making them distrust the evidence of their senses, or driving them into downright Atheism. For many ages have those two trees of knowledge been confined to narrow corners of the earth, where the far greater part of mankind never come within their shadow: and even to this day there are many savages and children cut off in their infancy, who do not appear to have reaped benefit from

from either; nor do the best of us enjoy the full effect which may be expected from them, when grown to their destined perfection. From hence we conclude the eye of Providence fixes attentively upon perfecting human nature, without looking upon any good or evil of particular persons not lying in the line therewith.

29. Shall we then say with the Stoics, that God cares for great things but neglects the small? that his Providence is over the human race? over empires or nations, but not over single persons? We do not say this of an earthly politician, if we believe him a righteous one; for we suppose he will consult the benefit of a few or of a single man, where it can be done consistently with the public good; and whenever he pursues the latter by damage to the former, he will wish to make him amends. Therefore there are honours and rewards for those who have served their country, reliefs for those who have suffered in the service; we have Chelsea and Greenwich hospitals for the sick and maimed, pensions for the widows of such as have been slain, and if it were necessary to pull down any man's house for repelling an invasion, I do not doubt but the public would make up the loss; for our legislature will not suffer a foot of ground to be taken away for widening

ing a turnpike road without an adequate compensation in value to the owner.

But all services are not repaid, nor all burdens and damages compensated, for this is impracticable; therefore the politician stands fully excused by his inability: for if he had the power of restoring life and limb, and if the public revenues sufficed to repay every farthing of all that had been called for in times of public exigency, it is to be presumed he would suffer no man to remain a loser who had in any manner contributed thereto. But with God there is no inability, for he has all creatures and their fortunes, in all stages of being, at his disposal: why then should we doubt the righteous judge of heaven and earth will do completly, what we conceive a righteous man would do so far as lay in his power? Religion, no more than human reason, affords us the least ground to doubt of it, for we are taught, He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it: but Religion being preached to the poor, must accommodate itself to the conceptions of the poor, therefore the recompence is represented as a voluntary reward to be conferred by a future act of God, who after a formal judgment of mankind, will say to the righteous, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Whereas Philosophy may suggest

gest to him that hath ears to hear, that God being the First Cause of all powers, motions, and events, and having unlimited Omniscience and infinite Wisdom, may on forming a system of nature, lay out all the parts of it in such disposition as to bring forth every good and evil his goodness and equity require, by an unerring train of consequences, so as that a reward may certainly follow a hundred years hence from an act of God performed thousands of years ago.

Nevertheless, this is too large an idea for the illiterate or learned vulgar, who understand by nature no more than the powers and properties of visible bodies, animals, vegetables, minerals, fossils, the action of the elements, the laws of gravitation, attraction, and impulse, and other objects of physiological science; or at most include therein the transactions of men in their policy, their commerce, and mutual dealings with one another. Now in such a narrow view of nature, as beheld by those who can no more handle the telescope than the microscope, it is impossible to conceive how natural causes can operate upon a man after dissolution of his animal frame, when he ceases to be a physiological being; but whatever passes with him in his next state of existence must be supernatural and miraculous. Therefore, as I have ob-

served before in § 25, it is necessary for common use to shorten the line by bringing the two ends to meet, the act of God with the effect produced upon the creature; and representing the reward as a new donation of blessings, for which there are no causes yet in being from whence they could ensue. Nor is this a prevarication or concealment of the truth, it is only the translation of it into a language intelligible by the populace: for the belief that an ample reward lies in store for every labour and suffering in a righteous cause, I take to be the fundamental article, which whoever holds with a firm habitual persuasion, possesses so much of the saving faith: in this the Philosopher is sincere and unanimous with the plain Christian. As to the manner wherein the reward is brought to pass, whether by a long and complicated provision of causes already made tending to that effect, or by a dispensation to be made hereafter for the purpose, seems not so material: therefore he will be careful to inculcate the main point upon each man in such manner as may be most suitable to his comprehension, or consonant to his reason.

30. But when taking the telescope in hand, he will discern by the imperfections and wastes appearing in visible Nature, that it is the part only of a larger system, which like the

the corner of a magnificent building, will appear broken and incompleat, or in some of its members superfluous, when seen apart from the rest. He will consider likewise that what supernatural works are recorded, were given for signs and wonders to awaken mankind, not for any necessary uses which could not have been otherwise answered in the things whereon they were operated: and as the courses of Providence are carried on here by the instrumentality of secondary agents, he will take this world for a sample of the Whole, presuming that events throughout the universe are conducted by the contrivances of Wisdom rather than the operations of Power, unless occasionally so far as may be requisite for manifestation of the divine dominion to intelligent creatures. And he will see, that reward is propounded only for good deeds and voluntary sufferings, whereas there are many mischiefs brought upon particular persons, without their own act or consent, by the courses of Providence tending to the general good, for which equity requires there should be a compensation.

From these and other considerations he may be apt to stand persuaded there is a universal Nature, comprehending things visible and invisible proceeding by stated Laws steady as those of Matter, connecting the several systems under one established polity,

administered like that below by the instrumentality of secondary agents, that by those laws the particular Spirits are assigned to their respective bodies before birth, their passages from one state of being to another regulated, their fates and fortunes therein ascertained. Conformably to this idea, and to the observations herein before made upon the administration of affairs in the moral world, he may conclude that the grand scheme of Providence tends to raise human nature to the full perfection which it was proved to fall short of by Adam's transgression, and that every thing passing here below conduces in some shape or other to that end.

But to prevent being misunderstood, I must give notice that I here take human nature in a larger sense than commonly understood, extending it to the Hades or region of departed Souls, which I suppose still remain specifically different from Angels or other invisible creatures, as they were from birds, beasts, or other animals; therefore have a distinct Nature of their own, which I beg leave for the present to call the Human; and that this specific difference depends upon some small remains of the former composition whereto they still continue vitally united, which may have received alterations in its form and texture by what had passed with them

them upon earth. Now the perfection of human nature seems necessary to instate the partakers of it in happiness: for though, God be thanked, we have many enjoyments, and those generally more or less in proportion to our good conduct, yet are they mingled with many troubles, nor do the righteous always fare better than the wicked, neither are any exempt from the hazard of evils heavy enough to make the best of us imperfect creatures miserable; therefore we are none of us in a state that can be pronounced absolutely happy.

For as the Stoics called all men fools and mad, because alike destitute of that thorough love of rectitude wherein they placed the essence of wisdom, although they allowed that some approached much nearer thereto than others; and they employed the comparison of a man under water, who being holden an inch below the surface, was nearer the fresh air, but nevertheless as much in a state of drowning as another plunged twenty fathom deep, so we frail mortals, although some be plunged deeper in imperfection than others, yet are all alike liable to the mischiefs of it, until the moment of our emersion, upon which we shall at once commence happy creatures. This emersion then of human nature from the floods of corruption, appears

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to be the aim whereto all the dispensations of Providence have respect; for we have seen that the sentiments and transactions of mankind cast an influence upon one another, nearly or remotely, though in a manner we cannot always trace out: whence may be presumed that whatever passes upon earth, was calculated for producing those ten righteous persons spoken of above, whose wisdom and example will quickly raise such others of their species as have communion with them into the pure salubrious air of perfection, wherein they shall remain uninterruptedly and invariably happy, liable to no disquietudes, endangered by no temptations.

31. This state of human nature, totally discharged from all remains of original sin or sinfulness, and the miseries attendant thereupon has been figured by the Millennium or kingdom of the just: which, whether it shall happen before or after the conflagration, or be introduced at all upon earth, or whether we may exactly determine its duration by the name given to it, are to my thinking matters of mere speculation. The term Millennium implies that it will not be perpetual, but succeeded by a third state of being still beyond, wherein we shall cease to be human creatures in any sense of the word, becoming specifically the same with that company among

among whom we are received. Which seems to favour our hypothesis of the Mundane Soul, whereinto human nature being absorbed, the members of it will become incorporated in the universal host of separate Spirits vitally united to no material substance whatever. And this I take to be a matter of importance; because by it alone can be explained how Equity may be fully satisfied, notwithstanding great inequalities during the states of animal life, and of the Millennium.

But that the kingdom of the just, reinstated in the gross bodies they formerly possessed, should be established here upon earth, stands liable to great difficulties: for how narrow soever you may contract the pale of salvation for grown persons, you cannot well exclude children dying in innocence, before birth, or under seven years old, amounting to above half the species in all successive generations: and it is hard to conceive how the earth, however new modeled, can commodiously maintain such a prodigious multitude of inhabitants. Besides, that the tender frame of our bodies, liable to a thousand disasters, is but ill suited to a state of security from all mischiefs and dangers: or if you say that the elements will be changed, so as to contain nothing noxious to life or health, then is the happiness not owing to the perfection of human

human nature but of the external, which we do not find the courses of Providence tending to compleat. Nor need we be solicitous for the place where this kingdom shall lie, for happiness is happiness wherever found, whether upon earth or under ground, in the Sun, or in the Moon, in the air or the fields of ether; while we have a reasonable hope that God intends to raise our nature to perfection and happiness, we may trust him to find a convenient spot where we shall enjoy it fully, and that without a miracle or change of his laws established for the material world.

Nevertheless, though I have supposed that when perfection takes place in ten righteous persons, it will quickly spread itself throughout the whole community, it may be remembered that there are degrees of happiness, so that those who shall inhabit the kingdom of the just may be all happy, and yet differ from one another in the intenseness of their enjoyments, according to their several former preparations, as one star differeth from another star in glory: besides that we know not how long it may be before that kingdom takes place.

I have offered reasons in the Chapter on Redemption to shew that in this life we are only made redeemable, not actually redeemed; that multitudes pass off this earthly stage without ever having an opportunity of entering

tering the way of salvation; and that from the article in our Creeds concerning the descent of the united Christ into Hades, it follows that something was done there towards compleating the Redemption of mankind; from whence it may be presumed there is a tree of perfection gradually nourishing up by the courses of Providence, in the next World as in the present. And until arrived at full maturity there may still be pains and troubles, greater or less, according to their management of themselves here, even among those who are to be partakers in the kingdom of the just.

I thought proper to make this remark, because it may have a good influence upon our conduct in life, on which I would ever keep an eye in all my speculations; for if there be degrees both of reward and punishment, if the righteous shall differ like one star from another in glory, and he that offendeth much shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that offendeth little with fewer stripes, there is an encouragement for every little advance towards virtue. The good will be incited to continual vigilance, not only because it behoveth him that thinketh he standeth to take heed lest he fall, but because every smallest step he can make higher than the level where he now stands will be an advantage gained: and

and the wicked, though he should not be able to rid himself of all his vices, yet may find it worth while to endeavour removing some of them, as he will thereby procure an abatement of his punishment. Neither do I apprehend it dangerous to good manners, if it were believed that the failings of the best men will be attended with some future inconveniencies, therefore have supposed in my Hypothesis of the Vehicles, that every one carries some terrene concretions with him, which will prove extremely troublesome until he can get them discharged. For the doctrine of a Purgatory seems innocent in itself, or rather salubrious, to keep men vigilant as well in lesser matters, as in securing the main chance: it is only the absurd notion annexed thereto, of praying or buying souls out of purgatory that renders it a heresy repugnant to reason, to Religion, and to common sense.

32. Upon the foregoing representation made of the kingdom of the just, it is apparent, that God in caring for great things does not neglect the small, nor overlooks single persons in the very steps he takes for perfecting the human race. For since the happiness of that kingdom will extend to every individual member thereof, whatever is done towards introducing the kingdom is done for the benefit of every one who shall become a member:

member: so that when God brings afflictions upon the righteous by the dispensations of his providence for promoting the grand design, he acts more graciously for the sufferer than if he had warded him from them. Hence likewise may be understood how private interest is contained in the general: because none of us can be happy until all are so by our common nature being perfected. Therefore he that suffers voluntarily in a righteous cause, manages most prudently for his own private interest: for he purchases the reversion of an immense estate by a present payment far inferior in value, and contributes to shorten the remoteness of the reversion, or in Scripture language to hasten the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Nevertheless, the plan of Providence contains a multitude of works; there is wheel within wheel, having each their several uses, yet so admirably adjusted as not to interfere with the principal design. For though nothing be omitted proper for conducing to the general interest, yet there are likewise particular providences respecting nations, and families, and private persons, procuring them their prosperities, their supports, and their enjoyments, their deliverances, their protections, and their reliefs: as experience may convince any one, who will bestow a little careful ob-

servation upon what passes within his own knowledge. So that we may reasonably believe, there is not a single pleasure withholden, which could have been given without detriment to higher designs; and the smallest things, though certainly they must give preference to the greater, not neglected through want of attention.

33. Upon occasion of the divine care extending to the smallest things, I shall venture to put in a word on behalf of our younger brethren of the brutal species: yet it is with fear and trepidation, lest I should offend the delicacy of our imperial race, who may think it treason against their high pre-eminence and dignity, to raise a doubt of their engrossing the sole care of Heaven. I shall not allege that Nature has provided the animals with accommodations for breeding, for harbouring, for feeding; because it will be said these were given for our sakes, to fit them for our services. But let it be considered, that by those very services, they become remotely instrumental to our salvation: for how could the Divine or the Philosopher perform the part allotted him in carrying on that great work, without the sustenance, the cloathing, the other conveniencies, he draws from the irrational tribes? or at least if he could, it is fact that he does not, and therefore some-

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thing is owing to them for the help they give him in his principal concern. Besides, it has been shewn in the foregoing pages, that the plan of Providence for perfecting human nature does not stand confined to the operations of Religion and Philosophy, for the polity of nations, the characters and transactions of the people, have their share in the work: and the commerce, manufactures, and employments, influencing those things, derive many of their materials and receive much of their assistance from the inferior creatures.

Then for the orthodox, with whom I am likely to have somewhat more difficulty upon this subject than with the reasoner, I beg them to consider, that oxen, lambs, goats, and doves, have by express command of God been slaughtered for atonements and sacrifices, and made subservient to the uses of Religion. Since then as well by his special injunctions as by his ordinary providence, he calls upon the creatures for their labours, their sufferings, and their lives, in the progress of his great work of the Redemption, why should we think it an impeachment of his equity, if he assigns them wages for all they undergo in this important service? or an impeachment of his Power and of his Wisdom, if such wages accrue to them by certain stated

stated laws of universal Nature running through both Worlds.

In what manner the compensation is operated would be needless and impossible to ascertain: perhaps they stand only one stage behind us in the journey through matter, and as we hope to rise from sensitivo-rational creatures to purely rational, so they may be advanced from sensitive to sensitivo-rational. And when our nature is perfected, we may be employed to act as guardian Angels for assisting them in the improvement of their new faculties, becoming lords and not tyrants of our new World, and exercising government by employing our superior skill and power for the benefit of the governed: by which way may be comprehended how they may have an interest of their own in every thing relative to the forwarding our Redemption. Yet it is not necessary they must have bodies shaped, limbed, and sized exactly like ours: for the treasures of Wisdom are not so scanty as that we should pronounce with Epicurus, there can be no spice of reason or reflection except in a human figure, and upon the surface of an Earth circumstanced just like this we inhabit.

No doubt it will appear a wild and absurd imagination to fancy that a dog can ever be made

made to think and reason like a man, and so indeed it may be while you take your idea of the creature from his hairy hide, his long tail, his lolling tongue, and gross organs of sense; but it is as absurd to suppose you can ever teach a sucking child the mathematics; yet the child may grow to be a man, and then become capable of the sciences. Nor is it easy to conceive how a man, while consisting of an unwieldy body, with a variety of discordant humours circulating therein, can become purely rational, perfectly happy, secure from all dangers, proof against all temptations; yet we hope that man shall one day rise to the condition of an Angel: then by Man must not be understood his whole composition, but some internal part which when disjoined from the rest, will still continue to be him; and how know we what internal part may belong to other animals, capable of higher faculties than they now can exercise? When the caterpillar changes into a butterfly, we easily apprehend it to be the same creature, with larger powers than it had before, and if we knew the worm had passed its time in uneasiness, but the fly in a greater degree of pleasure, we should acknowledge the enjoyments of the one a compensation for the troubles of the other, both being numerically the same.

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But when the butterfly dies, we see no Chrysalis left behind, yet we are not to think every thing absolutely lost that is gone beyond the reach of our senses: there may still remain an imperceptible Chrysalis, from whence will issue another fly with powers superior to the former; and while the same perceptive individual passes through all these changes, it will continue the same creature, notwithstanding ever so many alterations in the external form and substance. If you grant but that a dog feels me when I pinch him by the tail, this is enough to prove that he has a personality, and that what feels the pinch is an individual; for perceptivity cannot belong to a compound, any otherwise than as the other component parts may serve for channels of conveyance to some one which receives the perception entire; and in whatever different compounds this individual resides, they are successively the same percipient. Nor is the case otherwise with ourselves: for, as has been already observed in the Chapter on the Trinity, personality and identity belong properly to Spirit, Matter has none of its own, but assumes a borrowed personality from the particular Spirit whereto it happens to stand united.

We all apprehend ourselves continuing the same persons from the cradle to the grave, notwith-

notwithstanding that many believe all the corporeal particles belonging to us change every seven years; because the same percipient abiding with us throughout makes every fresh set of them become a part of ourselves for the time, while adhering to us, and serving for our uses. And the personal identity, currently believed to continue through life in the brutes, rests upon the same bottom with our own: every child who reads the fable of the Old Lion buffeted about by the beasts in revenge for the tyrannies he had exercised over them in his youth, acknowledges he deserved the punishment. But punishment is not ordinarily esteemed just, unless inflicted upon the very party offending; therefore the whelp, the young, and the decrepit Lion, is conceived all along the same identical creature: but this identity must depend upon the feeling part, for the corporeal composition may be supposed to fluctuate and change as ours does.

We have no knowledge of other percipients unless by means of their appearance and discernible actions, therefore cannot know what other powers they might not exert, if they had other instruments to serve them: we are ready enough to think that if we had as good a nose as the hound, we could distinguish scents as well as he; or if we had the wings

and piercing optics of the vulture, we could soar aloft, and discern objects as far: what then should hinder but if those creatures had our nice texture of brain, they might make as good use of it as we do? or what evidence is there in experience or reason to prove that every perceptive individual is not capable of receiving whatever perceptions any organization, vitally united thereto, is capable of conveying? Our physiological science does not extend to the laws of Universal Nature governing the worlds unseen, we must take our conceptions of them from our ideas of the divine Attributes; and the boundless Goodness of God is no slight evidence to persuade us that his Mercy spreads over all his perceptive creatures to whom he has given an individuality, rendering them unperishable, and that he has provided laws among his second causes which will raise them gradually from a more abject condition to higher faculties, and higher degrees of enjoyment. From whence it seems probable there is a general interest of animals, comprehending that of all other species together with the human.

I shall not scruple to own that, however this point be determined, it will make no difference in our treatment of the animals; therefore the generality of mankind, to whom it

it can be of no benefit for their direction in the conduct of life, are welcome to reject it with ridicule and exclamation at the strangeness of the thought; but for such as like to handle the Telescope, to attempt excursions into the boundless regions of universal Nature, and can find a use in speculation for warming and enlarging their hearts, it may prove not unavailing. For my own part, I place my hopes, not so much in any supposed pre-eminence of my present nature, nor merits of my person, as in the riches of the divine Bounty: and the farther I can persuade myself that Bounty extends, the higher rise my hopes. My principal solicitude is for the fate of the human species, because being one of the number composing it; but if that be secured, if God design me an elder brother's portion, I care not how many of our younger brethren he destines to receive the like: for I have so high an opinion of his inexhaustible treasures, as to lie under no apprehension, lest he should be forced to abate from my share in order to make up for theirs. Besides, that a good-natured man, who knows what slaughters and hard services the animals are put to for our necessary uses, in some whereof he is forced himself to give a reluctant hand, will feel a satisfaction in having room to imagine their interests so connected with ours, that

whatever advances the one must advance the other, and all they do or suffer for our benefit, will in the long run redound to their own.

34. I have now endeavoured to shew that there is a general interest of the human species promoted by every thing happening among particulars; and in the last section have hazarded an attempt to extend that general interest to the animals: in which interest of the whole society or Genus, the good of individuals is contained; so that every one contributing by his labour or his suffering, whether designedly or accidentally, to the common good, works therein most effectually for his own benefit. But though it be better for all individuals, as things stand circumstanced, that whatever passes among them should pass in the manner it does, yet we cannot pronounce it better, either for the whole or individuals, that things should stand so circumstanced. Our nature being in a state of degradation, every thing that contributes to improve our condition, is certainly a blessing; but we cannot say it was for our sakes that God has placed us in this degraded state. None can deny his almighty power to have made us at first a kingdom of the just, nor to have given us our nature originally in the same perfection, superior to all force of temptation, whereto we believe it capable

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of being raised: neither that the inferior animals might have been formed at once with the highest faculties they shall ever arrive to.

Besides, when we comprehend the good of all individuals under that of the species, this must be understood with some exception: for Religion assures us there are wicked creatures, who shall never inherit a portion in the kingdom of the just; and though the light of Nature does not shine so strong as that we can read by it the particle Never, yet it shews there must be miseries grievous enough to make it glaringly apparent, that the wicked have managed very imprudently for their own interests, nor can it discover any certain limitations, either in weight or duration, of those miseries. But can we pronounce it impossible that the evil courses bringing on those miseries, could have been prevented; or deny that men's characters depend upon the bodily and mental organization, the company and situation of life wherein Providence has placed them?

I am far from believing that God impels any man to sin, but whoever commits it is drawn thereinto by his own lusts: for it is of the very essence of sin that it be a free act of the Will, done with discernment of its being wrong; for the very same act performed through ignorance or by compulsion of ne-

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cessary causes, would be no sin. But I have already shewn in the Chapter on Freewill, that the turns of our Volition depend upon motives thrown in by antecedent causes, and though some of those causes may have been influenced by our former good or ill management, yet were we determined in like manner to that management by other prior motives; so that our whole tenor of conduct derives originally from the action of external causes. But lest I may be thought singular and heterodox in that notion, let us have recourse to the common opinions: do not we all esteem it a blessing that we were born within the pale of salvation, that we have had a good education, have fallen into good company, that there are divine services, and sermons, and good books to resort to; and do not we think ourselves forwarded in our way to future happiness by these means being put into our hands? or that we might not have entered upon the way at all, had we been utterly destitute of them? Yet our birth, our education, our company, our services, sermons, and books, were no acts of ours, they were the bounteous gifts of Providence: but how were they blessings, if we should have made as good use of our Freewill without them? for it is by the acts of our Volition, not by the size of our talents, or measure of

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our occidental improvements, that we fix our future fate.

On the other hand, how many poor wretches fill our jails, that have been bred up from their cradle in all manner of vice and villany? We do not think them fit members for the kingdom of the just, yet were they led into their evil courses unavoidably, nor ought we to judge it improbable that some of them might have proved saints, had they been favoured with all the same advantages that we have. Or shall we say they might not still be rescued from the dominion of sin by him who was able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham; or if that were impossible, could he not have taken them away in their infancy, while yet in their innocence. Add farther, that we ascribe the proneness to offence, and unruliness of inordinate desires prevailing in us all, to the fatal effects of original sin: but who shall presume to say the methods taken for purging off those effects would not have availed to prevent them? Is the efficacy of the divine Persons so confined as that it could operate only upon certain particular subjects? If then the Son had been pleased to unite himself to Adam instead of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit descended as powerfully upon his immediate descendants as upon the Apostles, the first temptation might

have

have been resisted, we might all have been born in Paradise, and passed a life of unsinning obedience.

Since then God has permitted the fall of the whole human species, has suffered some to stand in a situation from whence there is no chance but they will take the road of destruction, and leads the most favoured through many troubles and long stages of imperfection to the kingdom of the just; we may conclude there is some wise and gracious purpose in all these things. For it is incongruous with our idea of his Goodness, his Righteousness, and his Holiness, to imagine that the courses of his Providence, either in Nature or Fortune, ever bring on any physical, or permit any moral evil, unless for some greater good to result therefrom. Now we cannot think it for the good of the human species, or the animal Genus, the perfection whereto their natures are destined should be so long delayed, nor that the miry road of labour, trouble, suffering, and imperfection, should be made the necessary passage thereto; much less that numbers of them should never attain it at all, but remain objects of punishment whereof we can see no end: therefore the good must redound elsewhere, but where else shall we trace it? It cannot accrue to our Maker himself,

himself, for he receives no accession of happiness from whatever passes among his creatures: the benefit then must accrue to the host of pure Spirits disunited from all corporeal mixture whatever, heretofore called the Mundane Soul.

In what manner it accrues we have not materials enow in experience, the basis of all our science, to explain; so far as conjecture can go I have already offered my sentiments in former Chapters: but we may certainly conclude, if any thing can be concluded with certainty from the character of our Almighty Governor we draw from experience of his works, that all the labours and troubles, imperfections, diminutions of happiness, suspensions of sense by sleep, distempers, or otherwise, all the sufferings and miseries of this world and the next, serve to some uses of invisible beings, and are necessary to compleat their happiness: from whence it follows, that they have an interest in whatever passes here below, as well upon the earth as in the Hades. Therefore the evils sustained by creatures consisting of a grosser or finer material composition are important services to others, who are free from that imprisonment: but the imprisonment subjecting them to those evils, we must acknowledge to have been brought about by the provisions of Heaven,

Heaven, the laws of universal Nature. Can we then harbour a suspicion that the righteous Judge of heaven and earth will suffer his universal laws to exact a service from any creature, without assigning him competent wages; or imprison some of his children for the benefit of the rest, without an adequate compensation? or can we doubt that the Fountain of all powers, the Author of all Nature, who carries on his works here by second causes, proceeding upon certain stated rules, was able to ensure the wages and the compensation by the like methods? Now the most obvious way we can conceive the compensation consequential upon the services, is by the creatures performing them being, upon dissolution of their material integuments, admitted into the society of beings purely spiritual: in which case they will be sharers in the advantages they have been made to work out for the spiritual nature, and partake of that happiness they had been employed by their sufferings to support.

35. It may seem incredible that the same creature can ever be made to participate in natures so widely opposite: but let us reflect a little upon what is currently holden by the most orthodox. We believe that a human fœtus just felt alive by the mother, though shewing no more signs of sense than an oyster

ster or sensitive plant, may rise to an equality with the Angels. We believe that every damned Soul in hell was capable of becoming a glorified saint, if he had taken the right methods during his abode upon earth. Even Wesley and Whitefield believe that by their terrors and rantings, they have rescued many a hardened wretch who without their aid would have gone in the certain road to perdition; and if they could teach the Gospel in Tartary, they should rescue many who now will perish eternally: so the salvation of their penitents depended upon their good fortune in bringing such powerful Apostles to instruct them. We believe likewise that Angels and Archangels have fallen to a state of degradation below that of men and animals: for I think any man in his senses would choose to be an ass, an oyster, or a beetle, rather than a Devil, and esteem it a less debasement of his nature. Thus we see, that, agreeably to our common notions, the highest natures and the lowest may be exchanged for each other: and that every perceptive individual is capable of being invested with any of them, according as the laws of Providence, governing the natural and moral universe, shall cast them upon him.

Nevertheless, the exchange spoken of above may be thought contradictory to Scripture, and

and this is enough to overthrow all other arguments that can be alleged in support of it: but let us consider in what Spirit the Scriptures are to be consulted, for we are told the letter killeth, it is the Spirit that maketh alive. There are texts whose literal tenor declare expressly against the rotundity of the Earth and the Copernican System, insomuch that Gallileo was forced to recant them formally by the infallible Vicar of Christ under pain of excommunication: yet those opinions now maintain their ground, even among persons who have the highest veneration for the sacred records. Let us remember the Gospel was preached to the poor, therefore delivered in a language conformable to their ideas and conceptions: so we must look there only for the rule of Faith and practice, nor can expect to gather any thing from thence concerning matters of speculation; as the point before us certainly is, because if admitted, it could make no alteration in our measures of conduct. There is reason to believe that at all events, the evil consequences of a wicked life will be so great as to deserve all our pains and vigilance to escape them: and we could employ no more than all our pains and vigilance if they were absolutely eternal: the same methods of piety and good manners are necessary, whether they

they be endless, or only temporary, for a continuance to which nobody can set the certain bounds. And should they be in any shape serviceable to the spiritual host, so it may be presumed the happiness of compoud creatures is likewise: but no man can tell whether it be better for that host, that he in particular should make himself happy or miserable, therefore his own good and the good of his own species is to be his sole guidance in the choice.

Thus the notion above suggested can have no influence upon practice, but may have a good influence upon our Faith, although itself not a necessary article of it: for that is most pure and saving when containing just sentiments of God, consistent and uniform throughout, liable to no doubts nor difficulties, nor wavering. But I have known very pious persons who found great difficulties in the thought of punishment absolutely eternal, as it seems to indicate an inveteracy, and insatiableness of vengeance utterly repugnant to their ideas of Goodness and Holiness, and as the incurring or escaping it depends much upon external causes: for though we cannot fail unless by our own wilful misconduct, and must work out our salvation by our own actions, yet it is undeniable that our Will and hearty desire to work it out was owing in great

great measure to the situation wherein we were born, our education, the company we have fallen into, events touching our hearts, and other favourable circumstances, none of which were of our own procurement, but derived to us by the courses of Providence; which seems to infer a predilection and reprobation, as utterly repugnant to their ideas of righteousness and equity.

The compensation suggested above, although made at an immense distance of time will suffice to obviate this difficulty of reconciling the ways of Heaven with our ideas of the Attributes; for God, to whom a thousand years are as one day, in whose eye the magnitude of objects does not lessen by their remoteness, may counterpoise the nearest by the remotest in the scales of his equity: but no encouragement to sin can be drawn from hence, for things so immensely distant do not weigh upon our imagination. Men may possibly allege them in excuse for what they do upon other inducements, for it is not uncommon to mistake plausible arguments that may be urged in justification of our conduct for the real motives of it; but whatever they may pretend, when they do wrong, it is always some pleasure of the day, some present passion or pressing desire that prevailed on them to do it.

If

If these reasons shall be allowed to obviate the objections occurring against the scheme proposed in the last section, I know of none other obstacle that should hinder its reception: and then the general interest will be extended to the whole host of created beings, carrying with it that of every individual contained therein. The spiritual natures will have an interest in the mixed, whose labours, transactions, and sufferings, contribute to the necessary support of their happiness, and whose enjoyments lessen the weight of a burden they lie liable some time or other to undergo themselves: the imprisoned have an interest in the state of their elder brethren set at large in the fields of happiness, which in due time will be opened to themselves; and the services they perform are but improvements of the reversion they shall one day inherit. Thus every perceptive creature becomes a citizen of the universe, entitled to his share in all the privileges and profits thereunto belonging; and whatever he does, or is made to do for the advantage of the whole, redounds to his own private benefit. Nevertheless, this does not take off the obligation of pursuing the happiness of our particular species, of any lesser community, of our neighbour, or of our own persons, by any means that do not bring greater detriment upon

others:

others; because, as remarked in a former place, by doing good to any one member of the universe, we add something to the stock of enjoyment among the whole: but it may serve for a consolation under any troubles we are forced to go through in a good cause, or see falling upon ourselves or others inevitably, or accidentally, to reflect, that we being subjected thereto by that Providence which orders all things for the best advantage of our great City, they are purchases of an estate to our own use infinitely more valuable than the price given in payment.

Thus the general interest of the universe has this advantage over all less general interests, that it turns to the account of every individual member, which is not always the case with any of the others. There are many unhappy wretches who it is believed will never obtain a place in the kingdom of the just, and so have no part in that great blessing of the human species: many private persons reap no benefit from advantages accruing to the nation or society whereto they belong. What are those brave heroes the better who have perished in the American expeditions, for our successes there? What am I the better who am taxed in my land, and my windows, and my beer and my wine, and my dry goods, and almost every thing I use

or possess? I never expect the return of a sixpence into my own pocket from all those acquisitions; therefore esteem it a piece of virtuous self-denial that I bear my burdens willingly and chearfully, because believing them imposed for the necessary uses of my country; and look for my amends from the great general interest, which I apprehend advanced by every laudable measure.

This general interest then we may presume the grand aim whereto all the dispensations of Providence thoughout every world have respect, and our gracious Governor acts most kindly herein for his creatures, because it is more valuable to every one of them without exception, than any inferior interest wherein they may have a share: whence follows that all the successes, adversities, transactions, and occurrences, among particular species, or communities, or single persons, contribute something in their several ways towards supporting the universal happiness that it may never suffer diminution. I say supporting, for though I have before spoken of advancing, there scarce seems a likelihood that it should admit of an increase, having been given in full measure on the first creation; as we may reasonably suppose, because there could be no higher interest to be served by a delay, or gradual

growth of this from the stages of imperfection. But whatever was necessary for its sustentation must never have been wanting, from whence it seems an unavoidable consequence, that there ever have been and ever will be Earths and Hades interspersed among the universe, though the particular creatures have their appointed time to pass their journey through them, and then take up their abode for an infinitely longer continuance in their proper home, the Spiritual Nature.

Thus the perfection and happiness of the universe remains always invariably the same, but that of the human species, with every portion and member of it, perpetually fluctuates: for even when in a state of improvement, that improvement admits of frequent intermissions and retrogradations: it is like the tide flowing in waves upon a gently-rising shore, at the return of every wave the water runs backward, though the tide be coming forward all the while. We grow from infancy by gradual but not by continual encrease, for sickness or accident sometimes pulls us back, but when recovered therefrom find ourselves stronger the following year than we were the preceding. Few who have improved their fortunes but have met with disappointments in the way, when things seemed to turn against them as much as ever they had

had been favourable, yet those very untoward accidents sometimes prove the means of making matters better than they were before. We lay in stores of knowledge with greediness, and when seeming to have gotten them compleat, find them unmanageable by their number, unfit for use, involved in doubts and perplexities; until by long digestion, order springs imperceptibly out of confusion, and we have just learned to live when it is almost time to die. Nor is it likely as argued in a former place, that we should carry our acquisitions with us, because our old ideas must be troublesome, as giving a hankering after things we can have no more, and casting a terrifying strangeness upon the new scenes around us: yet the benefit of them may accrue by their fitting our organs for the exercise of powers and attainment of sciences we were not capable of here; like the motions of a child in the womb, which though of no use to it there, render the joints supple for the subsequent uses of life.

So likewise the growth of nations proceeds, in a manner similar to that of our faculties, by unequal and interrupted advances: invasion, rebellion, anarchy, and confusion, seem to destroy their very being for a while, but upon every emersion out of those disorders, they rise with fresh vigour, and a better

settled constitution than ever they had aforetime.

To come lastly to the improvement of human nature, which we have compared to a tree, and like a tree it has its winters wherein the leaves and honours fall off, the juices stagnate, and it appears withered and lifeless. So Religion at times has been overwhelmed with ignorance, superstition, magic, juggling, and the grossest of human inventions: Philosophy has degenerated into sophistry, captiousness, arrogance, unavailing curiosity, and unintelligible jargon: both have been trampled under foot by ambition, licentiousness, war, desolation, and barbarism, insomuch that neither seemed to have any footsteps remaining upon earth. Nevertheless Providence has ever preserved latent seeds of both to shoot up at intervals in new plants, more vigorous and healthy than those from whence they were produced: and as the vine extends her marriageable arms to clasp the sturdy elm for her support, and enriches him with her dower of purple or amber clusters; so have they contributed mutually to sustain, to adorn, and to fructify one another.

37. We may presume the tree of perfection strikes stronger root and will arrive sooner at compleat maturity for being sometime cut

cut down, than it would have done by a continual and equable growth. Certain it is that much good does spring from evil, our pains often prove the source of our pleasures: enhancing their sweetness by the contrast, creating new ones in the satisfaction of escaping them, exercising our activity and industry, which may supply us with many we should miss of; disappointment whets our sagacity, and adds treasures to our experience; even vice and folly have their share in contributing to the services and conveniencies of the world. How should we man our fleets or recruit our armies if there were no such thing as idleness, extravagance, and debauchery in the kingdom? I believe few even among the poorest ever breed up their children to those services, so that if none were taken into them who did not enter out of prudence or deliberate choice, I fear the little state of Genoa might be able to overrun us. The parents wish their lads to get a safe and honest livelihood upon land by their labour, or to learn some manual trade for a subsistence: but when a young fellow is good for nothing else, or becomes involved in debt, or hampered in some dangerous amour, then away he goes to make food for powder, or a sop in the briny broth of Ocean. And when commenced warrior, he becomes serviceable more by his imperfections

tions than his good qualities: the watchings and fastings, the wants, distresses, bangs, and bruises he has brought upon himself by his irregularities, inure him to a hardiness that nothing can hurt; his averseness to forethought and the habit of singing Hang sorrow, cast away care, render him intrepid, because blind to danger, insensibility proving a succedaneum in the place of fortitude; that hardest of virtues to be acquired by contemplation and reasoning, and last learned by the Divine or Philosopher.

Nor is it unfrequent that the vices serve like rotten dung to force up those exotic plants the Virtues in us: violence unites the oppressed for their mutual defence, gives them a liking to one another, and teaches the rudiments of Charity; injury, together with the many contrivances employed for colouring it over, urge us to examine into the real essence of justice; craft and cozenage keep us perpetually upon our guard, put our faculties to the stretch, and lay the foundation of Prudence, that corner-stone of all the other virtues. The greatest part of our profitable experience we gather from the wickedness and follies falling within our notice; and he that had never met with a cheat, would stand open to be imposed upon by the first that should take him in hand. The simplicity of innocence

innocence seems so have been the source of all our misfortunes, for if Eve had been deceived before by the serpent into some imprudences not criminal, she might have been aware of his wiles, and escaped that fatal error which proved the condemnation of us all. Our own miscarriages discover to us the weakness of our nature, and direct us what cares to take for amending it; they mortify our pride, convince us of our dependence, and shew that we are not masters of our own actions and thoughts, thereby manifesting the necessity of management and discipline to bring them into order. Temptations are necessary to invigorate our resolution by continually struggling with them; for he will never get an unshaken seat in the saddle, who never rides an unruly horse. More than half the employment in life, and half the use of reason springs from our inordinate appetites, and the unreasonableness of others: were those totally removed, there would be no business for discretion, nor vigour of mind enabling us to pursue steadily the determinations of our judgment. Nothing so easy as to live among a society of equitable, obliging persons, without passion or desire of our own to disturb us; we should never know our wants or infirmities, nor make any advance towards perfecting our nature; but it is war and powerful

erful resistance that make the hero, opposition and counterplotting that compleat the politician. The violence, greediness, and selfishness of a wicked world, require and teach us skill and fortitude to steer with a safe conscience among them; the unruliness of our own appetites, and deceitfulness of sin, oblige us to act with policy, and practise the art of making little advances for the interests of virtue under favourable circumstances.

Add further, that wickedness and passion set many excellent examples, by impelling to deeds that virtue might be glad to copy: for it is not beneath us to learn of any body, provided we apply our learning to better uses than those who taught us. The moralists exhort us to this method. Juvenal addresses his pupils the same way: Villains, says he, can leave their beds before day, to cut people's throats, why then cannot you take an hour from your pillow for your health and spirits, sake? The divine moralist recommends our imitation of the unjust steward, in his provident care for the future, that he might be received into a commodious habitation when turned out of his present. It would do us no hurt to take pattern from the Devil, who goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking incessantly whom he may devour, and setting all his wits at work to draw the prey into his snares,

snares, if we could learn thereby to be as indefatigable in doing good as he is in wreaking his malice; and those disciples of his who have spent years of toil and trouble in contrivances to glut their revenge, may teach us perseverance in the prosecution of a good design through the greatest discouragements and difficulties that may stand in our way. The command of passion and easiness under abuse, practised by the ambitious, the compliance with all humours by the flatterer, the hardiness of the night-robber, the application of the pick-pocket, the wire-dancer, and the balance-master, to become expert in their several arts, the fearlessness of death, the contempt of pain and distress in the common soldier or sailor, may serve as lessons and incitements from whence we may draw something to our advantage: for though these things can scarcely be called Virtues in the persons who possess them, yet are they ingredients which may well enter into the composition of virtue.

38. We may observe that God, in the courses of his providence, employs evils to bring forth excellent purposes: he raises kingdoms from bands of robbers, outlaws, and pirates, by rapine, violence, rebellion, misrule, and narrow selfishness of all kinds. How much are we obliged to the Norman invasion, unruliness

of

of the Barons, usurpations of the Pope, dissoluteness of the Monks, despotic passion of the last Harry, hypocritical zeal for religion and liberty in the next age, and headlong superstition of a popish monarch, for our present happy constitution? and I may add, for the robustness and vigour of it, to the encroaching temper of a neighbouring nation. He maintains the polity of nations by ambition, thirst of title, and of power; for who would submit to be thwarted in the cabinet, baited in parliament, and lampooned in public, without some fond passion for rule to tickle his fancy? he preserves their liberty by licentiousness, impatience of control, and envy; for who would ever mind what the ministers do, if it were not for the secret pleasure there is in the thought of mortifying the great? He leads to a principle of honour, that noblest sentiment in the human breast, by the desire of excelling, insomuch that some have made emulation a virtue: he sharpens our faculties by the whetstone of perverseness and litigiousness, which drive us to clear conception by the pains taken to misunderstand us, teaches sobriety and discretion by seeing reason turned to wanton speculations or mischievous purposes, and made an advocate for the passions; he exercises our patience by the diseases, pains, and troubles,

troubles, consequent upon our intemperance and follies, awakens our vigilance by the self-partiality of all whom we have to deal with, spurs us to activity by the pressing importunity of our desires, and weans us from this world by our eagerness in hunting after pleasures until they cloy with continual repetition.

Nor does he find the wickedness of men improper wheels for carrying on his most important designs among them: the turbulence of the Gracchi, ambition of the Cæsars, the exorbitancy of the Romans swallowing up their neighbouring nations one after another, the discords and factions among those nations rendering them an easy prey, all contributed to establish that peace and continual intercourse throughout a great part of the then known world, which was necessary for forwarding the promulgation of the Gospel. The treachery of Judas, and inveteracy of the Jews crying Crucify him, crucify him, were made the principal instruments in working out our Redemption: trials and persecutions were sent to perfect the first disciples: superstition and priestcraft have occasioned the calling in reason to discover their artifices, and purify Religion from their corruptions; enthusiasm on the one hand, and free-thinking on the other, still continue to keep us in the golden

golden mean, and rub off the foulness of all kinds that is apt to gather about us. Temperance, patience, humility, fortitude, and most of our other virtues, consist in resisting our appetites, and walking uprightly amidst the violent, the deceitful, the voluptuous, and the selfish: so that reason and inordinate desire seem to be the two antagonist muscles which give motion to the business of life; if either of them lose its tone, the other becomes enfeebled or convulsed, and a paralytic disorder ensues.

Nor does there want room to imagine that good may spring out of evil in other soils than those of this sublunary globe; we read that the wicked were created for the day of the Lord, and this may be understood not only as their punishment serves for a warning to keep the just in their duty, by strengthening their aversion to the causes of the miseries exhibited, but as the righteous may find something in the characters of the wicked capable of being turned to their own advantage: for we have seen above, that vice does sometimes produce outward actions in this world, which if proceeding from virtue, would be the highest exercises of it: why then should we judge it impossible, that the like may happen in the next? That unmoveable determination upon a particular purpose, that impetuosity

impetuosity of resolution and insensibility to impending mischiefs observed in the reprobate, may instruct the righteous how to imitate them upon better occasions. And if, as supposed in the Vision, they have the entire command of their passions to stir them up for particular services as wanted, they may find examples of more vigorous passion in vicious characters, and take stronger impressions by means of their sentient language, than perhaps reason could ever work up. Then for the purely spiritual host, although we cannot certainly tell how the evils among inferior creatures operate to their benefit, yet that they do so operate, I have already given reasons to evince.

Since then we find evil, as well moral as physical, productive of many salutary fruits, why should we deem it unworthy a place in the plan of Providence, or the permission of it repugnant to our ideas of Goodness and Holiness? for it is the ultimate end had in prospect, not the means necessary to attain it, that denominate the quality of an action. Therefore it ought not to be made a rock of offence, nor thought an impeachment of the divine Goodness, that evil is permitted: our opinion of that Attribute need only persuade us that God never terminates his view upon evil, not even of the particular creature

whereon it falls. He suffers frailties in the good for their trial, their warning, their instruction, their correction, and amendment: he suffers vicious characters for advantage of the community; he suffers wickedness, dissolution, and destruction in communities, for promoting his gracious designs in the advancement of human nature: he suffers imperfection, reprobation, and misery in the species, for some unknown benefit redounding therefrom to the spiritual host, in which host every perceptive individual in the creation has its principal interest. And nothing hinders but we may believe that our gracious Governor has reduced the quantity of evil in the whole universe to as small a compass as was possible in the nature and constitution of things.

39. That Nature and things were originally so constituted as to make any quantity necessary, is matter of Creation, which we have no faculties nor light from experience to understand: for the first Creation must have been a pure act, but we never saw a Creation, nor have any conception of a pure act proceeding without motives occurring from observation of pre-existent objects; and it has been shewn elsewhere, that there must have been other Attributes, whereof we have no imagination, concerned in the business of Creation. But like Moses we are admitted only

only to see the back parts of God, or rather the image of them reflected in his works, for no man can see his face and live, or while he lives: it is no wonder then we do not discern the full beauty and symmetry of the Attributes, some whereof are to us unseen and utterly unknown. And yet if there appear any imperfection in the reflected image, it is owing to the deficiency of our optics: for could we behold distant good in as striking colours as present pleasure, and had we a just sense of the vast disproportion evil bears to good throughout the Universe, and in the portion of every individual member, we should despise it for its smallness, nor think it any abatement in our idea of goodness. We have seen in former chapters, there is no reason to estimate it higher than in proportion to the length of our journey through matter, compared with that of the abode in spiritual substance; or the number of creatures in a state of imperfection, to those partaking of the purely spiritual nature, that is, one to many millions of millions. But let us take it only at one million, and compute how many years a million of minutes will amount to, which we shall find above two and twenty: if then a man were to live to the age of Methusalah in perfect happiness and full enjoyment of every thing he could desire, excepting only

only that he were to be in pain for one minute in every two and twenty years, he would find no cause to complain or murmur at the hardness of his lot. But our minutes of trouble sometimes come so thick together that they make a length farther than we can discern objects with an affecting clearness: so that the millions of joyful minutes beyond the line have no weight in our estimation, not for want of real substance, but because our concern being engaged by things in proportion to their nearness, we can raise none for those lying very remote; and thus our scruples arise from the imperfection of our judgment, setting a value solely upon things near at hand, and unable to discern a goodness the effects whereof we do not immediately feel.

Yet there are many persons whom a little sober consideration can satisfy, that it is no impeachment of Goodness to bring on a few physical evils, which work out a much greater good: but the grand stumbling block lies in moral evil, for which they cannot conceive that provision should be made by a righteous and holy Being. But Righteousness and Holiness cannot vary from Goodness, therefore whatever is ultimately productive of good, must be right and holy: for the very essence of moral evil depends upon natural; sin

were

were no sin; nor would God or reason forbid it, if the works of it never brought hurt or damage upon any creature whatever. Therefore physical evil being once accounted for, there is no difficulty in accounting for the moral; for if the mischiefs it produces be necessary in the universe, they must fall somewhere, and as I have already argued in the Chapter upon Holiness, it is more gracious and merciful that they should be incurred by wilful transgression, than commanded as a duty, or imposed as an inevitable burden upon the righteous. Nor need we fear that, vent being given to wickedness, it should overflow beyond bounds to make havock in the creation: for God who has all hearts in his hand, and can raise up children unto Abraham of the stones, can mark out the exact limits to iniquity, that it surpass not what is just necessary for his gracious purposes, and rescue the most obdurate from the dominion of it whenever that necessity comes

CHAP. XX.

IMITATION OF GOD.

WE are exhorted in the Gospel to be holy as God is holy, perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, and reason directs, that although we must never expect to hit the mark of perfection, yet we ought always to take our aim directly towards it, and endeavour to shape our proceedings by the compleatest model. Now what compleater model can we have, than the Fountain of wisdom and blessings who is gracious in all his dealings, good and righteous in all his ways, with whom is no envy nor malice, nor passion, nor error, nor selfishness, nor variableness, nor shadow of change. Nevertheless, as there is no rule so salutary that may not be perverted to mischievous purposes, men may take occasion to justify their wicked practices under a notion of imitating the divine example: and I should be very sorry to have given a handle for such plea by having in several parts of this work ascribed all events to the provisions of Heaven, made in certain knowledge

ledge and purpose of their being produced thereby; and particularly in the last Chapter represented both moral and physical evil as comprised within the plan of Providence, and employed to work out its gracious designs; which some perhaps may interpret, making God the Author of sin, the encourager and approver of all that is committed.

Now I do not fear to be suspected of such an intention by any candid disputant, for it is always esteemed unfair to charge an antagonist with consequences following from his doctrines, which he does not see and does not avow. But this consequence I utterly disclaim; yet shall not rest contented with such defence, being not so solicitous to save my own credit, as to prevent mischief ensuing to any body from the things I advance: therefore although I have already handled this point in the Chapter on Holiness, shall give it a re-examination here; esteeming repetition and superfluity more pardonable than deficiency upon a matter of this importance, because one may have the luck to cast a light upon things in a second attempt, rendering them apparent to persons with whom one had failed in the first.

I shall observe then, that we do not always imitate another by doing the same actions that he does, where the stations and powers

are different, but by conducting ourselves within our province with the same temper, dispositions, and views. The private man, who should take state upon him because done by the king, or punish a criminal because having seen the like procedure in a a magistrate, could never justify himself upon their example, because they would not have done the like in his circumstances, for the same deed may proceed from opposite principles in different agents. But we must remember, that God is in Heaven and we upon earth, that his knowledge is infinite, his command over all things, and there is nothing external to interfere with his work, or obstruct his operations in the universe: therefore he discerns the exact consequences of evil, and is able to restrain it within certain bounds that it produce none but such as are salutary, neither is there hazard of any accident to hinder the success of his measures. To us he has given a portion of understanding and power, and a narrow sphere to act in, wherein it is our business to conduct ourselves by the same spirit as observable in his Providence, that of ordering all things for the best, according to our little skill to discern it. But our prospects being short, we can never see the remotest consequences of our actions, therefore must take moral good

good for our guide, directing us to such as are profitable: if it sometimes seem leading into inconveniencies, yet we know not what unthought-of mischiefs may ensue upon other occasions by weakening its authority with ourselves or others: for if we lose sight of our polar star, we shall quickly wander into inextricable difficulties, nor can justify ourselves upon the example of him, whose Wisdom sets him above the need of any guidance.

2. But our faculties being scanty, we cannot carry in our imagination every thing that our reason convinces us must be truth, without great damage to ourselves; for which reason, although we must confess that all events proceed with the knowledge and acquiescence of Providence, nevertheless, there is a necessary distinction to be made between things providential, and others that are not, as I have endeavoured to explain in the Chapter bearing that title: nor ought we ever to ascribe things trivial or wicked to God, for fear of giving us a fondness for the one, or lessening our abhorrence of the other. For there is a different set of ideas, a different turn of conception and language for contemplation, and for common use: therefore it is remarkable, that in exhortatory discourses upon this subject, we are cautioned against believing God the Author of sin, the phrase employed is not

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his being the cause, for this manner of expression is not usually current in common speech; on the other hand, in our speculations, to whatever original causes we may ascribe the existence of moral evil, we never speak of him as being the author of it, for cause and author are two very different things. He who takes out an execution for a sum which the debtor's effects are but just sufficient to raise, may be the cause of his being reduced to poverty and distress, but cannot with propriety be charged as the author of his troubles; a justice of peace reading the proclamation to a mob of rioters, who he knows will not disperse, is the cause of the felony and the punishment consequent thereupon, yet cannot be called the author of them, nor imputable therewith: for being the author implies giving a sanction or authority to a thing, doing it with delight, or setting it as a precedent to be followed. Therefore if any man should happen to believe God the cause of sin, it will do him no hurt, provided he do not imagine him the immediate cause impelling or drawing thereinto supernaturally, nor that the commission of it will stand approved or excused in his sight, or be the less obnoxious to punishment upon that account.

But the perplexities involving this subject spring from mingling conceptions belonging to

to the two languages together by a kind of half-reasoning, that suffices to raise difficulculties but not pursue them to an issue: for there are those who will argue, that if causes were provided for the production of evil, the commission of it must be approved of; for it is absurd to suppose that God would admit an event into his plan, which he should not approve of when happening. But why so? The magistrate above mentioned might not approve of the felony he gave occasion to by an act performed for the preservation of peace and discouragement of riots? and a man may take physic without approving of the commotions it will raise in him, if he thinks it expedient for his health's sake: so God may permit wickedness he does not approve of, for the sake of the consequences to result from it. Well, but, say they, this will make the matter worse, for those consequences are the grievous punishment of the transgressor: so you represent the supreme Being as craftily malicious, giving course to iniquity that he may have just cause to take vengeance on the perpetrators. So indeed I own it must be regarded if we stop at the punishment, but the mistakes all along proceed from our sticking half way without carrying our thoughts to the end, which the suffering ought not to be esteemed, for there are the

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sevices resulting to the universe beyond, whereto the eye of Providence extends: therefore God no more delights in the punishment than he approves the sin, but permits both for the necessary uses they are of to his Creation.

Thus if evil be permitted by him, or even were the causes of it appointed by his Providence, we could not then pronounce it approved or pleasing in his sight: for it is a too subtl refinement upon words, drawing them out of their genuine sense, to understand by disapproved, an event that happens against his Will, for nothing can ever so happen; or by displeasing, something that gives him uneasiness or vexation, for these he is not capable of receiving. But in the obvious natural sense of approbation and pleasure wherein alone we have any concern to regard them, they belong to actions whereto God has annexed a blessing or reward: and if we take them in this proper signification as commonly understood, it will not follow that evil is approved or pleasing, because permitted for the sake of some necessary uses, accruing from the punishment incurred thereby. The approbation of God rests wholly and solely upon our good actions, and our endeavours to promote them, as well in ourselves as others, are alone pleasing in his sight; even

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in cases where it is his Will, for wise purposes to us unknown, that those endeavours should not succeed. If the master of a vessel having a hundred hands on board, being overtaken in a storm, employ all his care and diligence to weather it, and be excited to exert himself more strenuously in compassion to his crew and justice to his owners, nevertheless the ship with all its freight is overwhelmed in the sea: we must conclude from the event, that it was the Will of Heaven they should perish, yet both God and man will applaud the master though he did his utmost to oppose that Will, because he did it not in the spirit of opposition, but in compliance with the rules of rectitude, which we are always to look upon as the Will of God.

In like manner we may gather, from experience of ourselves and all around us, it has pleased God to permit, that folly and wickedness of all kinds should abound in the world, and that we ourselves should be foiled by temptations: yet we shall become most acceptable to him by setting ourselves with all our might to oppose the growth of wickedness, and struggle against every temptation assailing us. For though it should be his Will that offences shall come, it is not his Will that we should co-operate thereto: therefore woe is to him by whom they come. I have

have observed in the last section of the preceding Chapter, that inordinate desire and reason seem to be the two antagonist muscles giving motion to all the business of life, so that the business is carried on by the contrary action of those muscles: if there were no temptation, virtue would have little work to do; if there were no virtue, temptation would fail of its destined effect; but the work is compleated by the resistance of one against the other. God has been pleased to assign us the exercise of reason for our task, this then is to be our attention and our care, whatever we perceive tending to draw us aside from that exercise, we are to resist to the uttermost: if he has any secret purpose to overpower our reason, there is no fear that by resisting we should defeat it, for the purposes of God will always take effect, and a better effect for us upon our resistance, when made out of a regard to our duty. Therefore let us keep steadily to the province allotted us, esteeming it presumption and sacrilege to encroach upon the divine prerogative: for the permission of evil is the prerogative of God reserved solely to his own management, he alone knows the proper measure of it, and when it will produce more salutary than pernicious fruits among his creatures.

3. The benefits of evil, for which we may presume

presume it was permitted, accrue either to particular persons, or to communities, or the Species, or the Universe: to particular persons it serves for their trial, their correction, their humiliation, and awakening their vigilance; but there can be no trial of strength without exerting it in opposition to the adversary, no correction without endeavours to mend the frailty when discovered; a voluntary defeat will not prove a humiliation because we may think we could have conquered had we tried for it; and our vigilance is not awakened unless we stand upon our guard against future surprises; therefore so far as we willingly give way to temptation, we prevent the good effects it might have had upon us. Nor can we know the exact measure proper for our uses, or if we could, it were needless to do any thing for compleating it; for we may rest assured that the proper measure is already provided in our own frailty, and the external allurements around us: so we have no occasion to encrease it; but as we are taught to pray, Lead us not into temptation, it is incumbent upon us to use our endeavours towards preventing what we pray against, or else our prayers will be but hypocrisy and mockery, being themselves the very evil we pray to escape.

Neither can we know the conduciveness of

evil

evil to any more or less general interest, therefore can have no warrant to give it scope: we see nothing but disorder and mischief come from it, the intricate channel by which good flows from that disorder and mischief are discernible to God alone; therefore the permission of it may be gracious and holy in him, yet the practice of it would be malignant and wicked in us. There is room to apprehend the advantage accrues ultimately to the spiritual host, and it was for their sakes that evil has a place in nature; but we can form no rule from thence for shaping our measures, for want of light to discern in what manner the advantage accrues: for though it be probable they have an interest in all transactions and occurrences passing here below, yet we can never know what particular conduct is most expedient for them to be pursued. Perhaps it may be matter of consequence to the Mundane Soul, whether I shall put on my light or my dark-coloured suit to-morrow, but if I study till morning, I shall never find out which of the two it is best for him that I should wear; therefore I shall make my choice upon the same ground that other people go upon, by the rules of civility and decency, or if they have no directions to give, in the case, then by my own humour and fancy: for we may trust the disposition of Providence,

dence, that in every action, important or trivial, if rightly performed according to the occasion, all the good possible shall redound therefrom to every creature whom it can any ways affect.

But if upon these indifferent matters we can gather no clue of direction from the general interest of the creation, much less in those of the highest concern to ourselves: what though we may justly conclude from the floods of wickedness permitted in the world, that they are of some necessary uses, it is impossible for us to know whether it be better for the Universe, that we in particular should lead a wicked life: thus much we may know, that if better, it is so by means of the heavy punishment it will bring upon us, serving for an example or other unknown benefit to the beholders: which punishment is an apparent evil, deserving our utmost efforts and vigilance to escape; nor are we to concern ourselves with any thing beyond it, but are taught to look upon it as an eternity boundless in our eye. So far as the lights of our understanding extend, there is reason to believe that we serve the Universe best by doing the most good we can to ourselves and other members of it, because we add thereby to the stock of enjoyment in Nature: we have nothing to do with additions to be made any other way,

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to attempt prying into them would be meddling with matters far above our reach.

4. Nor have we so much to do for the general interest of the Species as we frequently imagine; the progress of perfection is carried on by the secret and intricate windings of Providence, to us utterly unknown, and many times appearing destructive of their purpose, therefore no objects of our imitation: the only obvious means are by embracing all opportunities that occur of advancing true Religion and reason, discretion and good manners, in such ways as our own considerate judgment, or that of other persons of approved characters may recommend. We take too much upon ourselves when pretending to reform mankind by other methods, by pulling down idols, demolishing meeting-houses, persecuting, damning, and censuring heretics, or by ridiculing things sacred, combating received opinions, and the like, without a calm examination of what effects our procedure herein is likely to produce: for this is acting by indiscreet zeal and impulse of passion, wherein we do not copy the most perfect pattern, who proceeds upon Intelligence and Wisdom, as well in his judgments as in his blessings, as well when he restrains, as when he permits of heresy and superstition.

And though the temporal interests of mankind

kind claim the preference before those of any part, yet do we seldom stand in a situation to look farther than the prosperity of our own country whereto we belong: wherefore in lawful wars the subjects on opposite sides may do their duty, and act agreeably to the Will of God, in opposing, weakening, or destroying one another, and taking every method that offers of doing service to their respective community. Even the public good of the community is too large to be the object of our constant attention; and in fact, in these climates of liberty and self-sufficiency, does occupy more of it than avails to any good purpose. How fond are our plebeians to sit in judgment upon laws and public measures, to pass sentence upon the ministers, and to mend the nation, when they had better been minding their shops and their trades? It is certainly for the preservation of liberty, that every one should be ready to cry out when he is hurt, and to join in with the complaints of those who have cause for them; but to cry before he is hurt, or has any well-grounded apprehension of danger, upon a flying report, a surmise, private interest, resentment, wantonness, or dislike, tends to discredit the voice of the people, and lessen their weight, that surest counterpoise against power, and strongest

est bulwark both of liberty and national strength.

Nor are we less officious in meddling with one another's affairs than those of our superiors, we must needs play the censor upon our neighbour's character and actions, lay out his expenses, regulate his dress, settle his table, and dispose of his children: and all this not with a probable view of doing any good to him or ourselves thereby, but only to gratify our vanity by the contrast of his follies and imperfections. As we are members of the species and of the community, and have our principal stake among them, it is our duty, our praise, and our truest interest to consult their benefit preferably to our private advantage, whenever the two happen to come visibly into competition; and as we live in society, we are to do our parts towards rendering it as beneficial as lies in our power, to every member of it within our reach. Therefore whenever the interest of Religion or practical Philosophy may be forwarded by our aid, when an improvement in any science, or art, or manufacture, or convenience for benefit of mankind can be made, any service done to the public, any real good procured for our neighbour, whether by instruction, exhortation, censure, ridicule, example,

ample, or otherwise, it is a noble self-denial to stop short in the pursuit of our own desires, that we may apply our industry to the greater advantage of others.

But opportunities of this sort rarely happen to most of us, we are not of such importance as that much of what passes around should depend upon our management; therefore our principal attention is due to the conducting ourselves well in our own affairs and several professions, for thereby we shall contribute the most effectually we can, towards promoting all other more general interests. And in so doing we shall be of more importance than we can perceive, for we are stationed and portioned by Providence, in whose works every little engine employed is necessary for compleating the great design, when acting in the sphere assigned it. This then is our province, or I may call it the little world which God has put under our government: it is our business to know the extent of our province, that we may not encroach upon territories beyond our commission, and to lay our narrow plan of Providence for the administration of it similar, so far as human infirmity will permit, though immensely unequal, to his universal one; ordering every thing therein for the best, according to the measure of understanding and power vouchsafed us. But

our discernment being short and our powers feeble, it will behove us to avail ourselves of those methods that have been prescribed for enlarging the one, and invigorating the other: those then I purpose next to take under consideration, examining into their several uses and manner of operation, in hopes to rescue them from the contempt they have lain under with some persons, and to settle their value upon the right bottom which has been misplaced by others, whereby we may the better learn how to apply them in due measure, and upon proper occasions.

CHAP. XXI.

CHRISTIAN SCHEME.

By the methods prescribed for enlarging our discernment and invigorating our powers, spoken of at the conclusion of the last Chapter, it will easily be understood that I had in view the Christian institutions: the examination whereof is best pursued by a calm and careful exercise of our judgment upon their several uses and operations. But the surest basis and necessary guidance for forming a judgment upon the parts of a system, can only be found in the general scope and main

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design of the whole, and the spirit wherein it was delivered: which will enable us to attain a clear conception of the words and phrases as we go along. The gifted preacher, when talking most sweetly and with power, so as to raise ecstatic transports in his audience, runs on in a string of animating words, with no determinate meaning. Whether or no this be the proper method for confirming and strengthening the godly, it is certainly not the right way to succeed upon the rationalist, whom I am to deal with: for he will expect to be addressed in an intelligible language, rather calculated to inform the understanding, than to warm the heart, or touch the springs of affection. Now the common language of mankind being various and fluctuating, the same terms and the same expressions carrying a very different sense according to the occasion whereon they are employed, nothing but an attention to the purpose wherewith, and spirit wherein they were delivered, can ascertain their proper force. Neither poetry, nor rhetoric, nor argumentation, nor, perhaps, any other performances, except in mathematics, can be fully understood, without entering into the spirit of the performer. And the Scriptures being given in the language of the Jewish populace, and abounding in figurative, my-

sterious expressions, many times seeming at first sight contradictory, it is no where more eminently true than here, That the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive.

But as you must pour water into a pump, before you can draw a supply of water from thence; and give fire to a cannon in order to excite the fire of the powder: so without a proper spirit of enquiry, you can never reach that of the object you contemplate. For a dull, or careless, or wrong-directed application will find nothing but lumpish load, or, at most, delusive blaze in whatever it falls upon. Hence it appears, there are two spirits to be considered, that of the learner, and that of the teacher; the former preparative for reception of the other. Therefore St. John bids us try the spirits; because they being the leading principles, whoever gives heed to those of a wrong turn will be misled, which is worse than no guidance at all.

2. The spirit of opposition and cavil is least likely of any to carry a man beyond the letter, to which it pertinaciously adheres for that very reason, because it is killing: or if it ever attempt to strike out a latent meaning, it finds one that is the most exceptionable, because affording the most ample matter for censure and ridicule.

The spirit of prejudice and prepossession, though

though not quite so pernicious as the former, serves as little to profit by: for it will admit of no improvement upon what it had brought from its own fund, but rather, like a mortification, turns the soundest parts into its own likeness. When a man has strongly imbibed the tenets of a sect, or espoused some particular notions of his own, he proceeds thenceforward with a spirit of zeal rather than improvement: he searches the Scriptures, not to learn by them, but to hunt for detached texts in support of his opinions. He forms a composition wherein several Scripture terms are repeatedly introduced without any accurate meaning, or apt connection in the places they are made to occupy, and then by help of a Concordance finds out all the passages wherein those terms occur, to be produced as divine authorities for his coarse-wrought texture.

There is likewise a spirit of vanity, which often mingles among the two foregoing, and sometimes operates alone. The scoffer and caviller move as much by impulse of vanity as crossness: the credit of shrewdness, and smartness of overthrowing great authorities, and debasing revered characters, works powerfully upon some tempers; and good-nature may more willingly admit this for the general root of opposition, because being a less blameable

able principle than mere rancour and resentment. In the zealot his prepossession seems to be the first spring of motion, but quickly leads him into an opinion of excelling, of conceiting himself the sole sure interpreter of the Sacred Writings, pitying the bulk of mankind, as deluded, carnal-minded creatures, and even ascribing the preservation and properity of the nation more to himself, and his associates in the same way of thinking, than to our counsellors and senators, our generals and admirals: for what avails the wisdom of the wise, the valour of the brave, or strength of the mighty, without the blessing of Heaven? which blessing is drawn down by the pious breathings of a few true believers persevering in their uprightness amidst a sinful and corrupt generation; so that our Sodom is saved for the sake of ten righteous persons happily found therein. Yet vanity will maintain her ground without either captiousness or prior engagement to support her. An ingenious exposition or plausible construction that nobody has hit upon before, will often beguile the most impartial enquirer to wander out of the way, and stop his ears against all remonstrances urged to bring him back again: for there is a shame in retracting an opinion one has once strongly given course to, and this will work unperceived even by the party under

under its influence. I have already remarked in my Chapter upon that article, that vanity will find means upon some particular occasions to insinuate itself into persons who are in general of an humble and rather diffident disposition; that none can be too vigilant against its attacks, because none can be secure against having them made upon him in the most covert manner.

Another spirit is that of novelty, which entices by the mere pleasure of making discoveries, without any reflection on their being the produce of an extraordinary penetration, or any comparison with the oversights of others. The knowledge of any truth apprehended useful is sweet to the mind, and our eagerness to taste this sweetness makes us entertain a persuasion of our knowing a thing before we really do know it. Therefore it is dangerous to pass a judgment upon a new discovery while it is a new one, and until time shall have abated the sweetness of novelty, and given scope for reflection to flow in from different quarters.

3. Besides these, there is a spirit of terror and anxiety, and a spirit of enthusiasm, which though of opposite qualities, the one being phlegmatic and diffident, the other fiery and presumptuous, nevertheless often unite in the same person. The first of these represents every

every persuasion of a divine truth as sacred, and every error or ignorance as the sin of infidelity. Whomsoever this spirit possesses, he is obliged under pain of damnation to find evidences in the sacred records of what he has esteemed a sacred truth; and that instantly, without hesitation; nor may he suffer his thoughts to suggest for a moment a construction of any text, however obvious and natural, that seems to raise a doubt against it: for to disbelieve or even doubt the word of God would be the most atrocious offence against his Glory. So he proceeds under a perpetual dread and trepidation lest he should mistake or harbour any mistrust: not being able to distinguish that it is one thing to doubt whether the word of God be true, and quite another to doubt whether some particular article be the true sense of that word. But without the latter doubt, there is no room for deliberation: for when you are clear on one side of the question, what have you to deliberate upon? Every searching the Scriptures implies a mistrust that our knowledge may not yet be compleat, and a decent confidence that we may get information by an honest exercise of our judgment upon them. But a fearful awe and hurrying solicitude must needs cramp the mind, not giving free scope for the balance of judgment

judgment to play, nor the weights to enter the scale; so that it can never make a fresh decision, either for improvement of knowledge or rectifying of mistakes. The case is the same in the most common matters: if a a man going to examine a taylor's bill, should have a pistol holden over him, and be threatened with being shot through the head, if he did not cast it up exactly right in three minutes, he would be able to make no use of his arithmetic in such a situation. Therefore the timid enquirer may indeed be secure against losing such knowledge as he happens to have; but if he lie under any misapprehensions, (as what mortal man is exempt from them?) it is impossible he should ever be cured.

The spirit of enthusiasm is no less averse to doubt and deliberation, which appear superfluous; for it proceeds wholly by impulse and intuition. It possesses with the notion of a supernatural power and illumination accompanying the sanctified, which displays to him objects in their true shapes and colours, that never could have been discovered by the exercise of the natural faculties. So he has no use for his understanding, but only for his eyes, to carry him along the several spots whereon the light within him from time to time shall strike. This spirit naturally introduces

duces that of prejudice and prepossession; and its misguidings are harder to be rectified than those of any before mentioned. For being known only by the strength of glare it casts, whatever strikes strongly upon the fancy, or is rivetted therein by continual harangues chimed always in the same strain, is taken for a supernatural light: and if any body offers to examine or reason upon it, he is rejected without hearing; for all human reasoning gives marks of a carnal man, who cannot know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

None of these spirits appear at all likely to reach the vivifying principle wanted: for either they stick at the dead letter, or extract something from it equally deadly with the letter itself. But the most serious and sincere being liable to fall, more or less, under the influence of any of them, except the first, it seemed expedient to take notice of the various dangers surrounding on all quarters, that we may know what to guard against.

4. For if we can keep clear of their misguidings, we shall more readily imbibe the proper spirit of a learner, which is that of meekness and sobriety, of calm consideration, attentive industry, and the docility of children; for of such we are told is the kingdom of Heaven. I do not apprehend it understood

stood that we are to come with the ignorance, but with the simplicity and inquisitiveness of children: for he that cometh to God must first believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; so that some previous knowledge is necessary for the learner to bring with him. But he must put on a disposition to receive whatever shall be taught him, in the genuine sense intended to be conveyed; he may laudably use his old knowledge for the quicker apprehension of what is taught, but must so far lay all his old opinions dormant, as that they may not obstruct its reception.

Here I must expect the freethinker will declaim loudly against me as a reviver of popish tyranny over the thoughts, an abetter of implicit faith; who would suffer nobody to use his eyes or judge for himself, but would have him submit his understanding to the authority of his leaders, and swallow any thing poured into his mouth with the credulity and eagerness of children. This clamour I shall endeavour to quiet by observing that it takes rise from the very mistake I have been complaining of, namely, that of sticking at the surface of the letter without penetrating into the spirit of what I recommend. It is apparent throughout this volume, that I have proceeded in the spirit of a neutral, not undertaking

dertaking to demonstrate the truth of Christianity; for this I leave to Divines, who are better versed in the external evidence and history; but striving to examine what it is, to compare it with the dictates of human reason, in order to discover what conformity may be found, and what reconcilement effected between them. I would have every man judge for himself, but not pass his judgment until after full cognizance of the cause: while taking this cognizance, he cannot do better than assume the openness and indifference of a child; when he has examined the internal evidence, and become master of the case; then let him resume the man together with his former opinions, contrasting them therewith, provided he has taken care to build them upon solid, rational foundations; and he shall know of the doctrine whether it be from God.

And I must observe to the freethinker that he has already practised more of the child than I desire of him: for he took his idea of Religion from what he learnt of his nurse while literally a child, and now passes his judgment upon her anile representation. Whereas he may please to remember I recommended the docility, not the ignorance of children: therefore wish him to study the cause afresh, now that he has acquired knowledge

ledge of other kinds and improved his faculties by practice; laying aside the old woman, and having recourse to the written word with the aid of Mr. Locke, and other learned expositors. If I advise a suspension of all old opinions which might obstruct his progress, it is agreeably to the golden rule of doing as one would be done by, being no more than what I practise myself in the perusal of any system whereof I have previously heard either a good or bad account. When taking Lucretius in hand, I enter into his ideas of rough and smooth, hooked, sharp, square, and multangular atoms, their uncertain declinations, and essential gravity, though contrary to my own persuasions; for else I could not expect to understand his plan, nor judge of its construction. The same thing I apprehend done by our judges upon a trial: if they have taken any impressions from reports without doors, they cast them aside, and during the hearing attend solely to the depositions of witnesses, and arguments of counsel on both sides; forming their judgment afterwards upon the lights gathered from thence.

Having thus vented my thoughts upon the spirit of the learner, they lead naturally to consider that of the teacher, the main scope and end aimed at by the doctrine, together with the means and manner employed in pursuing

pursuing it: whereon I shall offer my general idea without accumulating texts in support of every particular contained therein, which indeed I cannot readily recollect, and might be tedious and perplexing to the reader; who without my suggesting will be able to apply such as may be needful, from his own remembrance, and likewise to judge whether this idea in any part of it be contradictory to reason, and his experience of human nature.

5. The very terms, Salvation and Redemption, constantly employed to express the end proposed in the Christian dispensation, direct us to regard it as a deliverance from some evil that mankind laboured under: which evil is represented to have been brought upon the human race by the lapse of Adam, and is called Death. For man was created perfect, having access to the tree of life which would have made him immortal; until upon the first act of disobedience his nature was debased, himself banished from the tree of life, and laid under the curse; Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return. Which curse was taken off by the sacrifice of Christ, who was made a curse for him: and thus as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

I see no ground to apprehend that death was a direct and physical effect of the forbidden

bidden fruit, which contained such poisonous qualities as to render the bodies of Adam, and all his descendants perishable and mortal, or that a miraculous alteration was instantly worked in them by the divine power: But that there was one step intervening between the act of transgressing and death. For that introduced sin, and death entered by sin, being the wages and natural consequence thereof.

It occurs next to enquire what is to be understood by Death: the common literal acceptation, denoting a separation of soul from body on ceasing of the vital functions, cannot be admitted, as being incompatible both with reason and Scripture. For the denunciation, In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, was not literally fulfilled; because Adam did not die in the day that he ate. Neither is it conceivable, that death should be the wages of sin, or that if Man had never fallen he would have lived for ever: for this supposition will not stand with the contemplation of the frame and nature of the human body, nor constitution of the earth, which is not contrived commodiously to lodge and maintain all those multitudes which have been, and are likely to be born into it; besides being in its own nature perishable, so as to become some time or other

other incapable of affording any habitation at all.

Death upon the present occasion must be considered as an evil; for if it were not, as the denunciation of it would be no threat, so the deliverance from it would be no Redemption. But the bare separation of soul and body, or decay and corruption of the latter; is not acknowledged an evil either in Philosophy or Religion: let us then reflect what it is that makes it so. And this we shall find to be, the uncertainty of what condition it may throw us into, the apprehension of something dreadful to ensue, and the opinion that it will cut us off from all our delights and enjoyments whatsoever, and all means of engagement in the exercises of our activity. Without these concomitants, death were not death: it would be nothing different from sleep, which we never look upon as an evil.

6. Therefore death was made what it is, namely an object of terror, by sin; for Adam in his native simplicity of innocence was so far from fear, that he wanted even proper caution; but shame and fear entered upon the transgression. Then death began to be death, or an evil, and he first found himself obnoxious to it. But the transgression, or rather proneness of human nature to fall into it, was manifested by the prohibition; agreeably

ably to St. Paul's argument in Rom. vii. I had not known sin but by the law; for I once was alive without the law, but when the commandment came, sin took occasion thereby to deceive me, and slew me: so that in St. Paul's sense of the words, it was true, that Adam did die in the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit. And for the doctrine of original sin, or extending the consequences of Adam's disobedience to his whole posterity, I have already delivered my thoughts of it in the Chapter on Redemption, tending to shew that his offence was not operative upon the constitution of his descendants, but declarative of human nature, like an assay made upon a little bit in a parcel of reputed gold, which being found to be base metal, must prove a condemnation of the whole mass.

If this exposition be thought admissible, it will become needless to enter into the disputes that have been raised by Dr. Middleton and others upon the history of the fall: for be it a narrative of real facts, or be it an allegorical description of human nature, the doctrine learned from it will turn out the same, which likewise stands confirmed by experience. We all esteem children in a state of innocence, as not having sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and we and them not afraid of death, for indeed they

know not what it is. But when they have begun to discern right and wrong, are conscious of misbehaviour which has drawn punishment and mischiefs upon them, have contracted a fondness for the pleasures, been made acquainted with the evils of life, and imbibed the apprehensions of persons around them, then death assumes its ghastly form, and becomes an object of terror and dismay.

Should we take Adam in his uprightness for a representation of innocent childhood, we must imagine him as little apprehensive of death as that: he had heard it denounced as a thing to be avoided, but he knew not what hurt and evil were, having had no experience of them; for our ideas of reflection are only repetitions of some sensation we had experienced before. So he could feel no disturbance in the thoughts of death, of the evil whereof he had no conception: the most he could apprehend from it was a deprivation of the pleasures he enjoyed, but this though undesirable, was not terrible.

But this tranquillity and indifference of mind was no more than an insensibility or exemption from fear, springing from an unconcernedness for the future; which we may presume he would not long have remained under. Could he, and those of his descendants whom he lived to see, have escaped all attacks

attacks of temptation, we cannot but suppose they would have improved their faculties to the utmost, and attained all the knowledge that was to be attained thereby. If they had seen no premature deaths among them, yet they must have found upon contemplation of their bodily frame, and of the garden where they dwelt, that neither of them were constructed to last for ever. They would have known so much of death, as that it was a dissolution of the human composition; but still not known, that it was death, that is, an evil abhorrent to the thought, but rather regarded it as an admonition to examine what might be likely to come after. They then would have put forth their hands and have taken of the tree of life, and lived for ever.

7. I believe that tree was never suspected of bearing fruit whose juices should prove an Elixir vitæ, efficacious to cement the union between soul and body so strongly as that it should never be dissolved: therefore we must understand it as figurative of something else, and what else can we suppose it to shadow forth, unless such principles of sound reasoning, as, with due cultivation, would produce an assured expectation of enjoyment and happiness after their dissolution. They could not fail of discovering the unperishable nature of their spiritual part, which

was themselves, all else being an adjunct or covering, instrumental to their uses, but no essential or constituent part of their persons. And since we with our lapsed, feeble understandings can discern much of the divine power and beneficence, we must allow them to do the same in a compleater, clearer, more satisfactory manner. The purity of their minds would suffer no gross nor erroneous conceptions to mingle in their religion, nor to throw obstacles in the way of its progress; but would rise to just sentiments of their Maker, his almighty Power, his Intelligence, his Wisdom, his all-comprehensive Providence, his unlimited Goodness. They could have no suspicion of any hurt ever to come from him, having experienced nothing but unceasing bounty. For it has been observed in the Chapter upon Goodness, that our sense of that attribute fluctuates according to the condition of our minds: our mistrusts arise from the evils we see or feel, the mischiefs occasioned by our own miscarriages or those of other people, the melancholy gloom overspreading our thoughts, and the tastelessness of every pleasing reflection generated thereby. When at ease, and successful in our wishes, we can readily see that God is good, and the world a glorious world. Therefore they would confide in the divine Goodness,

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to provide them another Garden, equally delightful, whenever removed from that of Eden. Their prospect of pleasurable modes of existence following in endless succession, would connect the whole in one unbroken line of duration: so that they would esteem themselves, not as we do, creatures of a few years, but possessed of a life to last for ever; regarding the dissolution of their bodies as a passage from one scene of engagement into another. Just as a man in youth, health, vigour, esteems himself in possession of a long life, although he knows he shall be cut off from all his amusements before to-morrow by the slumbers of the night.

But this ripeness of knowledge and firmness of faith which would have put them in possession of a life for ever, was never arrived at: for they were fruits requiring the united endeavours of numbers to gather them, and the sin of our first parents occasioned their being driven out of reach before there was a third human creature to assist in climbing the tree. And the imbecility of human nature, whereof that sin was declarative, or as Middleton will have it, figurative, is so manifest as to make it appear a romantic supposition that any race of men, however happily circumstanced, should attain such a satisfaction and well-grounded assurance as I have just now described.

scribed. Therefore we all consider ourselves as mortals, in the condition of persons lying under an irrecoverable sentence of death; who is to us the king of terrors, or at best an officer coming with a writ of execution to sweep away all our possessions, our pleasures, our instruments of action, and every thing we desire, or wherein we can find solace or employment.

Thus I apprehend it may be understood, how in Adam all have died; for life is not life without enjoyment, which cannot subsist with anxiety and continual alarms: wherefore the philosophers laid down that no state can be pronounced happy, of whose continuance there is an uncertainty. From which uncertainty none but the perfect Wise-man could be exempt; who being an ideal character, no where actually found upon earth, the Stoics thence pronounced all men fools and mad, and consequently unhappy; or as translated into Scripture language, dead in trespasses and sins.

8. This temporal death, then, which we lie under during our animal life, must be meant by the declaration, In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die. But if this be the Scripture sense of the text, it is not the whole sense. For the main tenor of the Gospel, as all expositors unanimously agree, aims to

to warn us of another death, consequent upon that specified above, namely, an eternal death, to commence upon dissolution of the body: not an annihilation, nor perpetual insensibility, nor incapacity for all enjoyments of life, but a state of actual misery and suffering. Herein Philosophy joins hands with Religion, representing this life as a preparation for the next; declaring rectitude of sentiment and conduct, called Righteousness in sacred style, as the sole and certain avenue to a future state of bliss; and acknowledging the depravity of human nature, which cannot rise to that perfect wisdom which alone can ensure a happy exit.

The philosopher indeed considers this depravity as an imperfection rather than a corruption. He thinks himself in a state of childhood, born to greater things than he can now possess, his judgment not yet ripened, and his powers not compleatly formed: and if he can make a good use of those allotted him, he confides in the goodness of God for having provided his laws of Nature respecting both worlds in such manner, as that upon his emersion from matter he shall find himself invested with larger faculties, and stronger abilities, capable of raising him to that perfection which he can never reach while in this corporeal imprisonment. For he dooms

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it incongruous with the divine Attributes, that any creature should be placed in a situation which must lead unavoidably into misery, without any wilful negligence of his own, and against his utmost endeavours to extricate himself.

But this imagination our holy Religion overthrows, concluding the whole human race under the dominion of sin; from which no second causes, of those operating upon things visible or invisible, could rescue them without almighty power interposing for their Redemption: for as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive; nor is there any other name given upon earth whereby men may be saved.

9. But what shall we say to the comprehensiveness of that expression, All shall be made alive? Is it universally true that no man shall perish? I wish with all my soul I could find a warrant to say this: but it is what the most glowing Christian Charity dares not advance. Is it then, that all who are saved will be saved that way? or is it, that all without exception are put into a capacity of salvation, if they will embrace the terms offered for that purpose? The first of these constructions does little honour to the Christian dispensation, as leaving a total uncertainty how far the benefits of it extend, giving

ing men only a chance for their lives, for perhaps some may be saved thereby, and some may not. And the second will not be found verified by experience of facts: for the terms propounded are Faith in the Messiah, but how many children die before being capable of such Faith? how many pagan nations in ancient and modern ages never heard of a Messiah? Nor shall we ever be able to satisfy gainsayers, that it is consistent with divine Justice to permit multitudes to be born, and die, without ever opening the door to them through which alone they can escape eternal death. Besides the contrast and comparison with the death by Adam, which was undoubtedly universal, affixes the same sense to the life by Christ.

In order to clear up these difficulties it seems the most rational exposition to understand All collectively of the human race, not distributively of every individual comprised therein: so that it might be necessary, Christianity should prevail in the world, yet not necessary for every single person in the world to be Christian. Because if I am right in the general interest explained in my Chapter on Divine Economy, perfection once introduced among mankind in general, will in due time work perfection in the particular members; those who were true Christians gradually

dually infusing the vivifying principle by sympathy and mutual intercourse into the rest of the species.

But if it be judged orthodox to believe no single soul can be saved without actual Faith in Christ, I have suggested reasons in the Chapter on Redemption tending to prove that those who have had no opportunities afforded them here, may find them in another life. In support of which idea I have drawn arguments from that almost discarded article in the principal of our Creeds, He descended into Hades; from whence it may be inferred that there is a Christian Religion there, as well as upon earth. And at the same time have endeavoured to remove all handle that might be taken therefrom to encourage indifference and procrastination, by shewing that nevertheless such, to whom the terms of salvation have been fairly propounded, but rejected or neglected by them, can have no glimpse of probable ground to expect a second offer in their next state of being.

10. Before proceeding farther it will be expedient to remark, that life is not given directly by the hand of Christ, but he gives it because he gives that upon which it will follow of course: as a poor man may say his vituals and cloathing are given him by one who has furnished him with money to procure

procure them. And herein the comparison continues betwcen Christ and Adam: for though we are taught in one place, that in Adam all die, this is explained by another text which declares, that sin entered by Adam, and death by sin: in like manner are we warranted to say that righteousness entered by Christ, and life by righteousness. For as death is the wages or natural consequence of sin; so is life the wages of righteousness, the fruit it will naturally produce without farther divine interposition than was needful for planting and watering the tree.

Thus we see the deliverance it behoves us to lay hold of is a deliverance from that sin which entered by Adam, or rather that sinfulness of our nature which was manifested by his disobedience: which therefore was a prejudication of all who should partake of that nature, although they had not sinned after the similitude of his transgression. It remains to consider wherein this sinfulness or promptitude to do wrong consists: and we shall find it to lie in the prevalence of our appetites and passions over our judgment, or a thraldom of the Will.

I shall not repeat the metaphysical disquisition upon Volition pursued in the Chapter on Freewill: I need only to call to remembrance what has been said there concerning the

the determination of our judgment being ordinarily taken for our Will, and that Liberty, in the most common acceptation, is understood of such a situation wherein there is no obstacle to prevent that Will from taking effect. For what we judge expedient, we resolve to do, and think we shall do it: but our imbecility is such that desires and fancies start up too strong for our resolves, and carry us into a directly contrary conduct. This state of the carnal man is described by St. Paul, Rom. vii. I allow not that which I do: for what I would, that do I not: but what I would not, that do I. I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive unto the law of sin.

The very essence of sin presupposes this struggle betweeen the rational and sensitive faculties, styled by St. Paul the law of his mind and law of his members. Children do many things before arriving at the use of reason for which we are forced to reprimand them, but these are not sins because they know no better: it is their discernment of what is right, or having a law of their minds, that renders the continuance of those practices sinful. Thus the same St. Paul observes that he had not known sin unless by the law, for without the law sin was dead, but when the command-

commandment came, sin first gave signs of life.

11. This vigour and untameable violence of the sensitive faculties perpetually confines our views to objects of sense, to narrow aims, and gratifications of appetite, or worldly desires; cramping the understanding so that it cannot open wide enough to take in a comprehensive view of Nature, nor penetrate to the origin and Author of Nature; but lies liable to be continually overclouded with superstitions, or misapprehensions of the divine Nature and Attributes. Christ has declared that blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the Children of God. Whereby seems necessarily implied that, while impure or contentious, no man can see or be truly called the child of God, that is, possess just sentiments and proper affections with regard to him; which in other passages is expressed by entering the kingdom of heaven, coming to the Father, loving him with all the heart, being one with him, and doing his Will.

Neither were the judicious among the pagans insensible of this truth, that purity and holiness were necessary to the right understanding of things invisible. Wherefore they exhorted to purge the mental eye from all

all films contracted by constant attention to sensual objects, to refine the soul by the study and practice of philosophy: they recommended a total apathy, that is an exemption from passion and all inordinate desires or aversions, as indispensably requisite to compleat the perfection of Wisdom; and hold that such souls as had not been so refined, would, upon quitting their bodies, still have many carnal particles adhering to them, which must weigh them down to greater depths of wretchedness than they had ever sunk into during their abode upon earth.

12. We have now discovered what is the evil from which we are offered deliverance by the Redemption, namely, that weakness and consequent darkness of the Will or understanding, which subjects it to the tyranny of appetite, and renders the soul incapable of resisting the impulses of that foulness worked thereinto from the gross corporeal frame whereto we are vitally united. The Philosopher may build what hypotheses he pleases for getting rid of the foulness. He may say, that Nature has provided future punishments for purgation of contaminated souls: that as none pass out of life without a degree of impunity, all without exception must undergo some course of discipline suited to their respective complaints: some to be

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hung in the winds for sweetening, some plunged into rapid waters to wash away their filth; from others the dross shall be burnt out by scorching flames. It is not my business to contest the point with him, for I have not undertaken the office of a champion for our Religion, to overthrow all opponents; but have proposed only to enquire fairly and particularly what are the doctrines it teaches; and I think nobody can deny it to be one, that there was no provision of second causes sufficient to work the deliverance of human nature, but that it was effected by almighty Power interposing for that purpose.

Here it is likely I shall be stopped in my career with an objection of the freethinker, that it is highly blasphemous and injurious to the divine Wisdom to imagine, that God should have contrived his order of second causes so unskilfully as that a whole species of his creatures must be for ever miserable, unless he interfered with his own hand to correct the defects in his original plan. Upon which I shall observe, that his objection strikes beside the mark, being not levelled at the Christian faith, but the notions of it imbibed from the nursery; where the fall of Man may have been looked upon as an unexpected event for which God in his infinite mercy afterwards provided a remedy to cure

an evil he had not intended should befal. Whereas, if the objector had gone a few steps out of the nursery to fetch his Testament, he might have found there that the method of Redemption was contained in the eternal purpose of God, and consequently the depravity of our Nature, which it was provided to rectify, was eternally foreseen.

Or if he have an invincible averseness against all supernatural interposition whatever, I have shewn him in the Chapter on Economy what grounds he has in history and experience to regard the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian dispensations, as a series of incidents signally providential: having made appear before, in my Chapter on things Providential, that an event ought to be ranked among them which was produced by an extraordinary concurrence of causes, and attended with extensive and beneficial consequences.

13. But this representation of the Christian Faith being introduced by natural operation of a chain of second causes, proceeded from a desire of being as comprehensive as I could, so as to bring persons to entertain a favourable opinion, and make their proper uses of it, who could not digest all its articles. Which scheme we must now lay aside, being incompatible with the whole tenor and spirit of the

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Sacred Writings, the subject of our present enquiry: for they refer every where to an almighty Power interposing miraculously to rescue Mankind from an evil, absolutely inevitable and irremediable by the laws of Nature or any operation of second causes.

Now in order to maintain the character I have assumed in this Volume of a reconciler between Religion and Reason, although I cannot pretend to prove with some eminent divines that the latter conducts to the necessity of such interposition, yet shall attempt to shew that it carries no repugnance thereto, nor exhibits any thing that should render it incredible; and for that purpose shall recur to some discoveries already stricken out by the light of Nature, to take for my foundation.

Whoever will turn back to my Chapter on Providence, will find exhibited there so large an idea of the Divine Intelligence as to make it conceivable, that God might have finished his Creation from all eternity, and rested from his works ever since: having once for all formed so perfect a plan, and established so compleat a system of universal Nature, as that it should run on for ever without needing any farther touch of his hand; the causes of generation being adapted to those of corruption, and provision being made by the

activity given his spiritual creatures for continually repairing those immense decays of motion, occasioned by the mutual impulses and resistance of his inanimate or material creatures.

Nevertheless, it is not incongruous with our ideas of him, that he should have acted otherwise, and constructed his plan of Nature incompleat, not for want of skill or ability to do better, but purposely to leave room for interpositions of his almighty Power, and manifest himself in his character of Governor to his intelligent creatures. And for the probability of his so doing, I have suggested arguments in § 10, 11, of the same Chapter; and in the following sections have drawn proofs from the contemplation of this Earth we inhabit, and of the planetary system, that he must have actually interposed in the formation, or as vulgarly called the creation of this visible world. I have not indeed been able by the light of Nature to discover evidence of the like interposition in the moral world, yet the rules of analogy direct us to infer a probability of it from the manifest tendency of this sublunary system to Chaos and confusion, and remove all repugnance of reason against receiving that article from Revelation.

14. Add farther, that experience testifies there

there is a mixture of evil, as well moral as physical, in the world: from whence Reason concludes there is a necessity it should be so in the Nature of things as established on their original creation, evil having therein been made productive of good, and indispensably requisite to support and maintain that fund of happiness abounding throughout the Universe. Reason indeed gathers from contemplation of the divine Attributes, that the good exceeds the evil in an immense proportion, and confides that there are many forms of Being, among the whole host of perceptive creatures, totally exempt from the latter. Nevertheless, if there must be evil, there must be some species of creatures obnoxious to it; and nothing hinders that this should be man rather than any other species you can imagine. Neither can we feel a repugnance against the supposition that man came forth from the hands of his Maker without any taint of evil upon him, but was made liable to receive it from the influence of material or other agents: and that a remedy was provided to rescue him from such evil as soon as the purposes, whatever they may be, whereto it was necessary were answered.

Now whether provision be made of such remedy by natural or supernatural means, it equally obviates all impeachment of the

Divine Goodness and Equity. For if a parent sends his son to stay a considerable time abroad, we expect he should furnish him with remittances sufficient to subsist him the whole time: but if he kew he intended to go over himself before it was lapsed, though he did not set him out at first with full subsistence, we should not suspect him deficient either in forecast or kindness.

Agreeably to these decisions of reason we see the Scriptures representing man as originally placed in a state of happiness, to continue while nothing external interfered to disturb it, but with an imbecility, evidenced by Adam's transgression, incapable of resisting the first temptation that should accost him: that by repeated offence he contracted a depravity which would continually grown worse and worse, until it plunged him into the lowest depths of misery, nor could any skill or endeavours of his own prevent the mischief, neither was there any provision of second causes that could assist him. Nevertheless, God in his eternal purpose had provided a remedy for restoring him to his primitive condition, and supplying him with a vigour that should be proof against all attacks.

15. Little doubt can be made that the interposition here spoken of must be understood only of the Incarnation and occasional

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effusions of the Holy Ghost. I do not forget that the miracles and prophecies recorded in both Testaments are parts of the Christian belief: but miracle, as I have observed in the Chapter upon that article, is a particular species of supernatural operations. Those who hold the souls of children created from time to time as there is a fœtus ready to receive them, or that there is an interposing Providence continually watching over and correcting the errors of chance and freewill, must ascribe these events to an immediate operation of Almighty Power, yet never call them miraculous because they are necessary for carrying on the order and courses of Nature.

Whereas miracles are not wanted for necessary uses of their own, but as evidences, striking to the sense, of somethig more important to be manifested by them. Therefore we must confine the deliverance of mankind from its state of imbecility and wretchedness to the two causes specified above.

Those two articles depend upon the Trinity, which is counted the profoundest of mysteries: but a mystery ceases to be such as soon as revealed, that is, understood. For St. Paul speaks of the Christian faith as a mystery, because it remained such to the Jews, being shadowed to them in types and figures which

which lead them to the expectation of a temporal monarch coming with power to make the conquest of the world, but at the same time poor and mean, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief: which things appeared contradictory, and consequently mysterious. But when it was revealed that Jesus was the Messiah predicted, who worked out deliverance, not by earthly power and dominion, but by a life of righteousness terminating in a voluntary death, this was a plain proposition intelligible to the meanest capacities; even those who do not believe it true, yet clearly understand what is contained in the assertion.

So the confusedness of our ideas concerning substantial identity and union, involves us in mystery and contradiction. We apprehend that one individual substance may be split into many, and that several united together may produce a new substance of a compound never in being before: which perpetually carries us counter to the admonition of our doctors against either dividing the substance or confounding the Persons. I have already done my endeavours towards preventing those mistakes, in my Chapter on the Trinity, and need only observe here, what nobody can deny to be the orthodox doctrine of our Church, that it was the same indivisible

sible Almighty Being who governs all Nature as also the affairs of men by his ordinary and extraordinary Providence, who took upon him our Nature by an union with the human soul and body of Jesus, and who works occasionally upon our hearts to will and to do according to his good pleasure. That he did not thereby become three different Beings or Substances having transactions with one another, but assumed the appearance of three Persons or Characters, each having a separate office and distinct province of action.

16. Let us now try to settle the proper conception of Union, which is not a transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation extending throughout the same portion of space, nor yet the addition of a new substance to those entering the compound; but when things are so mingled together that we cannot distinguish them asunder, and so joined for a continuance as that we never see them separated again.

Which uninterrupted continuance of coalescence I apprehend characterizes the second Person in distinction from the third; the office of the one being to unite with the subject indissolubly; of the other, to accede for small spaces from time to time to different subjects as occasion shall require and in such secret manner as that, if I am right in my idea, we can

can never know, when the access was actually made.

That there is a similitude of operation between them stands likewise evidenced by the style and language of Scripture. The figurative expressions of oil and anointing are applied equally to the effects produced by both. The reception of Grace by the Holy Ghost is termed a Chrism, or anointing: and the characteristic appellation of the united God and Man is that of the Messiah, that is, the chrismed or anointed. Jesus is said to have been conceived by the Holy Ghost, to grow in Grace, and to have the Spirit descend upon him at Jordan.

Neither is the term uniting, or other expression of similar import, withholden from the regenerate Christian, of whom it is said the Father shall come unto him and make his abode with him and dwell in him, and that he shall receive power to be one of the sons of God.

From all which may be gathered that the application of the Deity to every sanctified believer was the same in kind with that to Jesus; but immensely inferior in degree, and temporary, with large intervals of disunion between. So that when we act under influence of the Spirit, still our acts have a mixture of imperfection;

imperfection; and in far the greater part of our acts we offend daily, being left to ourselves without any assistance, whereas Jesus being styled the Holy Child, we must conclude, that holiness accompanied him constantly and uninterruptedly from the cradle to the cross.

This interpretation steers clear of several heretical notions broached in former times; as that Jesus was a phantom, having no material body nor rational soul; but being an appearance exhibited to the senses by the divine agency impressing ideas of various actions and discourses passing before them; or that he was a mere man, and the Divinity within him nothing more than a power of virtue, like that which in a lower degree rested upon Moses and Elijah. As likewise the Arian opinion, that he was a Being of higher order than the Angels, singular in his kind, created with extraordinary power and intelligence sufficient to answer the purposes of the Redemption. For by the account above stated of the Christian Doctrine it appears, that Jesus was a real man, like unto us in all respects, sin only excepted; that the Divinity united to him, which together with his human soul and body composed one Christ, was the Supreme Being substantially and inseparably

rably present with him, supplying all imperfections in the created parts, And that human Nature was so far lost in corruption and weakness, that no created power in the universe, nor any thing less than an immediate interposition of Omnipotence, could suffice to deliver it.

17. From hence we may learn what were the immediate effects of the union upon the soul of Jesus: for we have no warrant to pronounce it produced any upon his body, being told that he was in human infirmity and in all other things like unto us, sin only excepted. Even the Resurrection was not a consequence of the union, being the work of God in his Paternal, not his Filial character: nor yet the Ascension, for he did not fly, but was taken up into heaven. Which restriction of the difference between him and other men solely to an exemption from sin, as cited just now, together with the similitude in the operation of the Holy Spirit pointed out before, directs us to understand, that the union did not produce any extraordinary intelligence, or knowledge, or enlargement of the faculties, but a continual supply of force to what St. Paul calls the law of his mind above the law of his members: so that his judgment was never perverted to decide amiss,

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nor was he in any single instance turned aside from his resolution by the temptations of pleasure, danger, or pain.

So the purpose and effect of the union was to rectify the sinful nature of Jesus; for that he did partake of a sinful nature by his birth from the woman, I see no reason nor scruple to doubt. Some I know have been carried by an inconsiderate and hasty zeal for the honour of their Savour, to insist that his soul was originally pure and perfect beyond that of all other men: but zeal operates very variously in different subjects. For my part, I must acknowledge that my zeal for the glory of God gives me a bias to imagine him less perfect than the rest of Adam's race: for I have so high an idea of the Divine Power as to believe it capable of sanctifying the most abandoned profligate soul that ever inhabited a human body; therefore if I could admit the doctrine of an intrinsic difference in souls, should stand persuaded, that God had chosen to unite himself with the very worst of the whole species, in order to manifest his Power the more fully.

But as I happen to have found no evidence of any such difference in my observations upon human nature, but that all souls are originally alike until corrupted in various degrees by vicious courses: it follows necessarily

sarily that the soul of Jesus was in itself neither better nor worse than our own. He was a descendant of Adam, and when it is declared that in Adam all have sinned, no exception is made of him: nor is this contradictory to the position of his being without sin. For that relates to the commission of actual sin, which we ourselves were not guilty of in Adam: for none of us were accomplices in the fact of his transgression. Therefore when it is said in Adam all have sinned, we must necessarily understand thereby, as explained in the foregoing sections, that all have partaken of a nature evidenced by the fall to be too weak and frail to stand against temptation; which nature the child Jesus partook of, sharing it in common with us. Nor are there marks left unrecorded by the Holy Spirit, in the circumstances of the last agony, and other particulars pointed out in § 10. of my Chapter on the Trinity, which indicate a natural imbecility and struggle with the carnal law of the members rising in rebellion against the law of the mind: which attacks of the enemy, together with the distress and sufferings brought upon the champion of our cause, may be regarded as one completion of the prophecy, that the serpent should bruise the heel which trampled upon its head.

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The same observation may persuade us that the human nature of Christ was not perfected instantly upon the first Incarnation: for as weakness is turned into corruption by repeated acts of sinning, so it can be raised to invincible strength only by repeated acts of righteousness; nor was it purposed by an exertion of Almighty Power to remodel the constitution, but to meliorate it. Perhaps Adam might have repaired the damage of his fall by a subsequent unsinning obedience; his nature being capable of a recovery, and even of improvement and melioration, by applying the proper means, had he been capable of making the application. But the Scripture represents it as impossible for him to do any good thing with his lapsed powers; and so indeed many philosophers allow that no man acts upon the sole principle of rectitude: therefore all mankind had been lost and undone for ever without the coming of the Redeemer, in whom the Godhead constantly residing restrained him from all actual sin, making him grow in grace and favour with God and Man, by gradual progress bringing the mental organs to such a firm and vigorous constitution as enabled him to perform an unsinning obedience in all trials: thereby placing human Nature in a better condition than when it first came forth from the

the hands of its Maker, for it was created in happiness and innocence, but subject to dangers which might deprive it of both; whereas now it was restored to the same happiness and innocence, but provided farther with a security against all hazard of losing them. Thus to be consistent with Scripture and the doctrines of our Church, it becomes us to raise our idea of the purity and perfections of our Saviour as high as imagination can carry them, yet ought we to ascribe them all to the Divinity united with him.

18. Nevertheless, these effects of the Union, so far as hitherto described, seem to terminate in the person of Jesus, not extending to the rest of the world, nor shewing him to have been the Saviour of Mankind. But though an interposition of almighty Power was necessary for restoring and perfecting their nature, it was not necessary that interposition should be applied directly to every particular member of the species. For I have shewn in the Chapter on Providence that in all cases of supernatural interposition there is likewise a disposing Providence, ordering a chain of second causes for compleating the design intended thereby. It is not the custom of our almighty Governor to do much with his own hand, he applies it rarely; for to do more than requisite for manifestation of

of his Power and Dominion, might prove an impeachment of his Wisdom, nor are his works made to want it often. He comprised his interpositions in the same original plan with his secondary agents, and so contrived the latter as that they would sometimes run amiss, yet upon a few turns given them upon extraordinary occasions, they should fall into the right course, and thenceforward proceed of themselves to bring forth the destined event.

We know the force of example, sympathy, and instructions given in consummate wisdom, to work strange alterations in the characters of men. Some philosophers have been positive that could we behold Virtue in her genuine colours, unclouded by any heterogeneous mixture, she would captivate all hearts; and I have attempted to make appear in the Chapter on Economy how one perfect man may communicate his influence to others near him, who by degrees may spread it throughout a whole community. Since then the imaginary Wise-man of the ancients was realized in the person of Jesus, why should we deem it unlikely that he, by the pattern he has set before us in a life of righteousness, by the love he has shewn in his sufferings and death, by the doctrines, the precepts, the institutions, the Religion he has delivered, together

together with some occasional aids of the Holy Spirit, should naturally raise human nature to its utmost perfection, and provide us with glorified bodies upon dissolution of our present, without needing any supernatural operation upon us at our entrance into another life, or intercession for further extraordinary favours than have been already bestowed.

Nevertheless, the effects which might be expected have not been produced in this sublunary globe; multitudes being born and dying without any possibility of sharing in them, and none having ever attained the righteousness of their pattern; for the very best, not excepting the Apostles, have offended in many things: from whence may be inferred, that what has been done here will continue to produce its consequences in the next stage of being, until it has perfected individuals, and spread to the whole human race, or such part of it as has not wilfully rejected the opportunities already afforded them.

19. We have now a clue towards explaining certain technical terms much used in all Christian discourses. They are figurative and mysterious, and then most mysterious when taken most closely in the literal sense; therefore here it is particularly incumbent upon

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us to penetrate into the spirit contained under the letter: for as soon as a man can enter fully into the spirit of what is said to him, he finds a light instantly break forth, which dispels all obscurities, and unveils the mystery. I know there are many people utterly averse to all rational explanations; they look upon every attempt to pry into sacred mysteries as a profanation; and though they sometimes seem fond of expounding difficult articles, yet is their exposition such as casts no light but rather darkness visible. It amuses, it transports, it astonishes, fills with a sacred awe and hurry of spirits, but conveys no clear idea, nor any real information; as if Ignorance were the mother of Devotion. Ignorance perhaps may be the mother, but a child will never grow to vigorous manhood, who is kept always in his mother's lap: and the attempt to confine him there, proceeds often from sinister design, because he will be more governable and susceptible to take any ply of zeal which may be wanted for private ends. Sometimes it arises from want of skill to do better, in such as have no more knowledge than just to qualify them for nurses, and a secret ambition of getting as many children under their tuition as they can possibly collect; and sometimes it may spring from an injudicious imitation of the Scripture

manner, which abounds in parables and dark sayings and riddles, so that seeing one may not see, and hearing one may not understand.

But it should be considered, that the Scripture language must appear more enigmatical to us than it was originally intended to be: for it was calculated for the Jews, and most of the figures employed therein having been adopted from the Jewish doctors, may be presumed familiar, and readily intelligible to that people. And for what were designedly riddles, they were delivered for holding our attention to the pursuit of one object requiring diligence to investigate it: for in the very nature of a riddle, it perplexes at first, but is not past all finding out. Therefore we may go on without fear or scruple, as under no danger of a profanation in unravelling the mysteries, by that exercise of our best sagacity and industry upon them which they were given to us to excite.

20. To begin with Redemption, the leading term introductory to most of the rest: it signifies literally the purchase of a captive slave from his master, by money or other valuable consideration. But the Redemption of Mankind was from thraldom under the Serpent, and was effected by bruising his head, which can hardly be called a valuable consideration given for the purchase. Or if

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you will say, as vulgarly apprehended, that the purchase was made from God, who being supreme Lord and Master paramount of all captives, could command them out of the hands of their immediate owners, what money or thing of value did he receive? what vacant space was there in the treasury of his riches that could admit an addition to encrease his wealth? what did he lose by the recovery of a fallen race that should require a compensation for the damage? And yet in our days the term is so constantly restrained to cases of slavery or pawnage bought off with money, that I do not recollect ever to have heard it applied to prisoners of war in civilized countries, although such frequently obtain their enlargement for a certain sum; because they are not regarded as a property of the persons who have them in their power, nor consequently as an object of sale.

But among the Jews, Redemption had a wider latitude, being extended to every deliverance from servitude, by what means soever effected. Thus in the Old Testament God is frequently styled the Lord who Redeemed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, out of the house of bondage, the Lord that brought them: yet nobody can apprehend it done by a bargain made, or any gratuity given to Pharaoh or other princes, to re-

sign up their right of dominion over their slaves.

Nevertheless, these expressions having been frequently used, gave occasion for introducing the like into the Christian dialect; such as the ransom for sin, that we are bought with a price, and the Satisfaction made to divine Justice. It must be owned that the phrase of being bought with a price is not quite alien to our present modes of speech; for when a person has met with many grievous accidents in the pursuit of an advantage he obtains at last, we commonly say that he has earned it dearly, that it has cost him a vast deal of pains and anxiety. Therefore Christ having debarred himself from what we esteem the enjoyments and conveniencies of life, and submitted to a cruel and ignominious death, in prosecution of his work of our deliverance, we may say properly that he paid dearly by his self-denial and suffering, for the benefits he procured for us. Yet still this amounts to no more than a half purchase, where something valuable is parted with, but there is nobody to receive it.

As for Satisfaction, that is plainly a very abstract and figurative representation of Justice as a Person, who was interested in our punishment, and could not recede from her demands without receiving an amends adequate

quate in value. By which figure was shadowed forth the immutable Nature of things established by the Creator, whereby righteousness and innocence were made indispensably necessary to the possession and security of happiness: which being lost in any part of the creation, occasioned a gap in the all-perfect plan not to be otherwise supplied unless by some efficacious method contrived for the restoration of righteousness and innocence.

21. Atonement and Sacrifice, together with the epithets Expiatory and Propitiatory, grow from the same root with that of Ransom: for equally with that, they relate to the giving of something highly prized by the receiver, only with this difference, that instead of money paid in consequence of a bargain driven, they carry the idea of lost favour regained by some acceptable present. This method of reconciliation being prescribed to the Jews in the ceremonial law, and likewise practised by the Heathens, seems to have introduced among both an opinion, that after having angered God by their transgressions, they might bring him into good-humour again by the sweet-smelling savour exhaling from their sacrifices, or the magnificence and beauty of their oblations. But who in these times of better knowledge can imagine, that God is to be bribed

bribed out of his favours, that any thing can put him aside from his purpose, or render him propitious when he was otherwise disposed? The phrase of bringing him to our desires carries the same import with that in common use among sailors, when they tell you that before you make into a particular port, you must bring such a hill to bear directly over such a point of the shore: they do not imagine that any efforts of theirs can stir the hill an inch from its place, but that they can work their ship till it comes into the spot lying in a line with the two objects described. So oblations and sacrifices could have no avail to move the heavenly Powers, but operated solely upon the offerers by bringing them, so far as the carnal ceremony or heathenish rite could do, into such courses of sentiment and conduct whereto the heavenly Powers were always propitious.

The same reasoning may be applied to the sacrifice of Christ, it could have no efficacy to change the immutable God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, or to turn him from severity and Justice to graciousness and Mercy; but was efficacious for raising the human race to that righteousness, which in his original constitution of universal Nature he had made the sole avenue to eternal life. In this light we shall see the value

value of his sacrifice immensely surpassing that of all others: for they could only produce an imperfect, temporary reverence and religious fear, and resolution to do right, in a few persons, whereas his will in due time work a compleat and permanent righteousness throughout all Mankind in general. And we may add to our estimation by recurring to another use of the figure commonly made among ourselves: for we say a man has sacrificed his pleasures, his health, his fortune to the good of his Country, when he has pursued it by measures detrimental to them all; yet without any thought of on oblation made to Heaven. Therefore it must greatly endear our Saviour to our affection to reflect how much he has sacrificed to rescue us from a wretchedness, which by all natural causes was absolutely irremediable.

22. The greatest sacrifice being that of life, terminating in agonies, and scourgings, and despondency, and at last a cruel death upon the cross, has occasioned the Redemption to be generally spoken of as purchased by that sacrifice alone, expressed often by another figure, not likely to be taken literally, that of our sins being nailed to the tree.

But as it is no unprecedented thing to accumulate figure upon figure, this of the sacrifice is re-painted by another, that of blood-

shedding:

shedding: and much talk has passed among the pious concerning the precious blood of Christ, whereby we were redeemed. As if the material blood in his body was of a richer composition than any other blood, containing an occult quality, or magic virtue, a vivifying Spirit, efficacious to purge away all seeds of corruption and mortality that could be found in the world. And the Papists carry this notion so far as to insist that no man can be saved without actually swallowing the body together with the blood included therein.

But I see no warrant to pronounce the blood of Jesus a whit better than that of any other man who was born with a good constitution, and had lived a sober, temperate life: therefore it was not the blood shed but the act of shedding that availed to our benefit. Nor yet can the shedding be taken strictly; for the crucifixion was not a manner of execution to cause much effusion of blood, excepting only a few drops trickling from the wounds made in the fleshy parts by the nails. But the Jewish sacrifices having been constantly made by letting out the whole mass of blood from the victims, this circumstance came to stand for all kinds of death in general; and so we should still understand it to this day. For I suppose any body might allege the text, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his

his blood be shed, in justification of his hanging a criminal who had murdered another by poisoning, or smothering, or drowning, although there were not a drop of blood spilt either in the crime or the punishment. Therefore we may say, without imputation of heterodoxy, that the blood was no otherwise precious, than as it served to sustain that life which he sacrificed for our sakes.

Nor yet can we suppose any benefit or delight accruing to the Father from seeing him expire on the cross: so that even his death was not expiatory or propitiatory in itself, nor any farther than as it was necessary for establishing the authority of the Religion he had instituted, for the restoring and perfecting human nature throughout the whole species of creatures partaking thereof.

23. The appellation of Merits can no more be taken in the strict primary sense than any of the former; for then it would imply a real benefit conferred, or profit procured deserving of its adequate recompence. If any body has done you some signal service in your health, your family, or your fortune, he has a merit with you, and you owe him a return of the like whenever an opportunity for making it shall be afforded. But what merit had even Christ himself with the Father? what obligation could his righteous-

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ness and sufferings lay him under? what accession was made thereby to his Power, his Intelligence, his Wisdom, or any other Attribute? You will find nothing tending that way in the sacred records, which all along represent the restoration of fallen Man as a Free Grace of the Father, not a debt to the Son.

Let us then reflect on the ordinary modes of speech in daily use among us, and we may recollect that Merit is often applied to skill and ability sufficient to go through with the undertaking we have under contemplation. A man of merit in his profession is one who possesses the talents, the dexterity, and knowledge, requisite for performing the functions of it. The merits of a cause in contradiction to forms and modes of pleading, are those circumstances attending it, which we apprehend of force to weigh with the Jury. Now in this sense we cannot but acknowledge the merits of Christ all-sufficient, able abudantly to save to the uttermost, and that the stream of living waters whereof he was the fountain, will never run dry so long as there is a thirsty soul wanting to be refreshed by them.

24. That we are saved by the merits of Christ, nobody can deny to be a part of the Christian doctrine: yet I shall not scruple to assert in the same breath, that we must be saved,

saved, if at all by our own merits. As much a contradiction, and as shocking to the pious ear, as this may seem, I hope to make it good both from Scripture and from Philosophy. Whoever will study carefully the eleven first Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, with the aid of Mr. Locke, may see that it is the main scope of St. Paul's argument to shew, that both Jews and Gentiles were under a necessity of resorting to Christ: in the course of which argument he admits the Law to be holy, and just, and good, the terms of the Covenant being, Do this and thou shalt live; but the Jew did not do this, that is, did not fulfil the law, for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole. To the Gentile likewise the divine Power and Godhead was evidently displayed in the works of the Creation, so that being without the Law, he was a law unto himself: nevertheless forgetting the invisible God, he gave himself up to all manner of unnatural filthy lusts.

The Philosophers, too, asserted that none but the Wise-man could be secure of happiness, who became such by having a love of rectitude constantly predominant above all his other desires, and urging him invariably to shape his actions thereby; for if he ever acted wrong, it was plain in that instance there was some other motive weighing with him

him more powerfully: but that there never yet has been such a Wise-man existing upon earth.

Therefore the Gospel, and I may add Philosophy, hath concluded all under sin, whereby all have fallen short of the glory of God, or eternal life: not because the righteousness of either Law, that of Moses or that of Nature, were incapable of giving life; but because the professors of both were incapable of ever raising themselves to such righteousness by an unsinning obedience. This righteousness then is the proximous cause operating to Salvation, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord: nevertheless, are we taught to rely wholly upon the Merits of Christ for our Salvation, because they are the sole and certain cause operating to the attainment of that righteousness.

25. It is easy to see that I have hitherto spoken of Salvation as an entire deliverance from the power of death, or an actual possession of eternal life; in which sense no man has or ever will attain it in this world. We might attain it here too by our own merits, but we have none, nor can get any: our hopes of ever reaching it elsewhere must rest solely upon the merits of Christ.

But there is a looser sense wherein a man is said to be saved, when he is going on in the

the strait road leading to salvation: still the certainty of this road having such termination depends upon the merits of Christ, efficacious to pave a way of Religion which should conduct human nature to its full perfection. Nevertheless, we must travel the road by our own righteousness, not indeed that of works, but that which is of faith, and of works only so far as needful to evidence and strengthen our faith. The merits of Christ are the cause operating to righteousness; but faith the pipe turning the stream of operation upon ourselves, instilling the living waters, the vivifying principle of Rectitude or Holiness, which may daily grow more and more predominant over our appetites and aversions, annul the law of our members, and bring us gradually under obedience to the law of our minds.

There is still another sense wherein a man may be said to be saved by faith alone, before attaining the righteousness which is of faith. If you knew a person labouring under a complication of distempers which must prove his destruction, and were persuaded there was some one eminent physician, of skill fully sufficient to deal with them, but against whom the patient had conceived an unaccountable aversion: though upon that account you might pronounce him a dead man, yet

yet if afterwards by much labouring the point you could overcome his prejudices, you would be ready to cry, Now he is safe, presuming that he would instantly apply, and certainly receive benefit from the doctor's prescriptions. In this view we find it frequently repeated in Scripture, that whosoever believeth in the Son shall be saved: and Mr. Locke, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, makes the belief of Jesus being the Messiah, sufficient to denominate a man a Christian, and entitle him to all the benefits of the Gospel covenant. For this is an entrance upon the road; and if the entrance be made with sincerity and thorough heartiness, which God only can know, although the convert should be suddenly cut off, there is no doubt of his faring well in the next world, as was the case of the penitent thief. But though the road be certain, the perseverance of the traveller is not certain, for some have fallen off from the faith they once embraced; but if the faith, being allowed time to grow, produce no crop of righteousness, such as this sublunary climate is capable of ripening, we must pronounce it a dead faith, having no vigour to push forth the genuine fruit.

So that it is needful to observe the various degrees of force at times attending the same expression, for else it will lead us into dangerous mistakes:

mistakes: for a man may justly claim a rank among the saved, yet remain in a very ticklish, uncertain condition. Nay, he may actually be safe for the present, yet by too great security and supineness cast himself out of that state: therefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

26. The terms Mediation and Intercession seem at first sight to exhibit a prospect of some farther exertions of Omnipotence obtained from the Father, which he grants, not of his own mere motion, but for the sake of gratifying his Son. This representation of God being worked upon by paternal fondness, and drawn by importunities to take measures he should not otherwise have thought of, must give great handle for cavil to the freethinker, against which we shall find much difficulty to make a solid defence.

Besides that the stupendous work of the Incarnation, together with occasional assistances by the Holy Spirit, have rendered all farther supernatural operations needless, the touches given by them have turned the course of second causes into their right channel, so that from thenceforward they may proceed unerringly to accomplish their destined purpose, the Redemption of Man. We want nothing now from the Father, more than the continuance of his disposing providence, and support of the

the laws of universal Nature he has established: for he has given all power to the Son, upon whom we may place a sure dependence.

And imputed righteousness is a very abstract idea, therefore the more surprising it should be so current among persons who affect to run down all abstractions, and to deal altogether in plain language, which he that runs may read. In the imagination of the running reader, it will carry the face of something solid, you can hold in your hand, and may be delivered from one person to another, like a purse of money, upon delivery whereof he may become rich who was poor before.

But whoever will stand still a while to consider attentively what he reads, may discern that these terms bear a reference to the completion of the plan of universal Nature by the coming of Christ. For Nature is the work of God: what she does, is done by him. For we say truly that God giveth us our daily bread, although it comes to us by the production of natural causes, and disposition of his ordinary providence supplying us with means of procuring it. When fortune frowns, it is his hand lying heavy upon us: when things fall out to our wish, we taste of his Mercy and Bounty. Now the plan of second causes was so drawn as to tend inevitably to

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our destruction, without any provision among them for ever delivering us therefrom. This condition of human nature is called lying under a curse, under the weight of irreconcileable wrath and vengeance: until the Christian Religion, introduced by the greatest of all interpositions, predetermined in the secret counsels or eternal purpose of Heaven, turned the second causes influencing the human Will into a salutary course, which would end in a thorough salvation from all wretchedness, and an investiture in the actual possession of eternal life.

This progressive tendency of our Nature towards perfection is termed a state of reconcilement and favour, and adoption to the privileges of children: the change of disposition in ourselves being represented by the figure of a change of disposition in the Father, from severity and anger to mercy and paternal affection. And as Christ was the agent who by the efficacy of his Religion worked that change, he is therefore styled the Mediator, having management of the great transaction between God and Man, obtaining for us the terms of the new Covenant, bringing down peace from on high, good-will towards men.

27. Yet because the perfection of righteousness, which is the cement of peace and sole object of good-will, remains unattainable

in this mortal life, but we have seen reason to conclude there is a Christian Religion in the next world, whereby it must be compleated: therefore the Mediation of Christ did not terminate with his death and sufferings, but he still continues to make Intercession at the right hand of God on our behalf, as well during our abode upon earth, as on our removal hence, and appearance at the day of judgment: By which Intercession must be understood, not an importuning of God for fresh blessings he had not intended to bestow, but a gradual forwarding of our progress towards that character of holiness, which will bring down those blessings; they having been already made the natural consequence and effect thereof in the pre-established Nature of things.

Then for the word Imputation, it implies the placing some article to the account of a particular person; or rather, in common speech, the discharge of an article that had been set down to him. When we would excuse a man for some offensive behaviour, it is customary to say, you must impute it to his ignorance, or indiscretion, or over-hasty zeal to oblige: thus discharging the man from the fault by laying it upon some infirmity whose misguidings are not to be deemed his act: But though it might be a sort of Catachresis

chresis in vulgar language, to talk of imputing a good deed, this form of expression is current in the Christian language: for we are not to impute our sins to Christ, for that would be laying the blame upon his instigating us thereto, but his merits to ourselves.

A man's success in the world depends upon his situation, his opportunities, and the merit he has in his profession. Now the profession of a Christian is that of Wisdom or Holiness of sentiment and conduct, as the only way to the attainment of eternal life. He may confide in the divine Goodness that he shall never want a proper situation, nor opportunities: therefore his prospect of success must be greater or less in proportion to his merit. When he comes to state the account with his own heart, he must be conscious that he has not the merit needful; if he fancies he has, he deceives himself, and a delusive hope is more fatal than desirable: so that the only solid ground of his hopes must be found in the merit or efficacy of his Religion gradually to strengthen his Will or the law of his mind, and invest him with the merit he wants.

By this way he may turn the balance of the account in his favour, being allowed to avail himself of the merit he shall one day acquire, and the performances he shall be enabled to achieve thereby: which I take to

be meant by imputing the merits of Christ, that is, placing to the credit side of our account those effects, which they will infallibly produce for the amendment of our Nature.

But they will produce no effects unless their influence be particularly derived upon ourselves by the channel of Faith; therefore it is faith that justifies: not that it makes us actually just, for no man goes out of the world a just man, but the true believer persevering to the end carries out that seed of righteousness which is of faith, that will grow to full maturity in a more salubrious climate. So that although upon his departure hence he should not be put into immediate possession of eternal life, yet he will inherit the promise of it, and fall into the sure and certain road conducting thereto, from which there is no hazard of his being ever turned aside.

And I think any man who has a taste for rectitude, or a hunger and thirst after righteousness, must regard it as a most desirable happiness to be placed in a situation wherein he shall continually be making proficiency towards the perfection of his Nature, and feel the soothing satisfaction of having neglected none of his opportunities; but at the close of every day shall be able to say with truth, I have been moving onward in my progress, I am advanced one step nearer to-

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wards the full accomplishment of my wishes. So the death of the righteous or faithful may be the direct passage into a state of happiness, although not into a state of absolute perfection; and that it is not, may be gathered from several hints given in Scripture of a final state surpassing the intermediate in blessedness.

28. We now see the points in dispute between the Philosopher and the Christian, when they understand one another, reduced to a very narrow compass, still leaving a near resemblance in their features. The one will not admit the fall of Adam by the artifices of the Serpent; but he acknowledges that human nature lies very low immersed in the filth of a material composition, whose corruptions taint the very soul: unable to clear itself from folly and error, or rise in any single instance to the perfect character of Wisdom. He banishes the Devil from his system, yet retains the prevalence of appetite, example, and custom, called the world and the flesh; and allows they will generate anger, revenge, spite, rancour, and other devilish tempers of mind. He will not hear of an Incarnation, that is, the omnipresent God included within a human body, yet he may comprehend a continued application of the Deity to the mental organs of a human frame,

frame, and how powerful efficacy the opinion of such an event has had to make a system of Religion prevail in the world. He finds no evidence of a Holy Spirit working upon our hearts, yet is sensible there are seasons of vigour and languor, of clearness and dulness in the mind; that we do not always proceed with the same spirit; that when it is wanting, no man can make any good progress in whatever he undertakes, and that there are certain means of quickening and quenching, or raising and depressing that spirit. He thinks the current belief abounding in absurdities and contradictions, that is, while he beholds it under the disguises of the nursery; for when stripped of them, and appearing in its native colours, with its shape and lineaments drawn out upon one uniform plan, he will discern it regular and consistent throughout, will distinguish between the forms and modes of expression rendered needful by the condition of human nature in the bulk of mankind, and the substance they were calculated to introduce: he will then perceive that the system of righteousness, sanctity, deadness to the world, and heavenly-mindedness, is the same with his own system of rectitude in sentiment and conduct, expressed only in a different language.

If he will not allow a merit in believing some

some particular proposition, he must be fair enough to grant there is none in disbelieving: neither of them are virtue or vice in themselves, nor make a part of the moral character. Nevertheless, the character may undoubtedly be influenced by opinion, so far as to take a total change: so that it is matter of importance what we believe, or disbelieve. Even if he should suppose an opinion erroneous, opinion being neither good nor bad in itself, he will judge of it by its consequences: and since as two negatives make an affirmative, so one error may bring a man round again to the point from which another error had led him astray, he must see the expedience of countenancing an innocent mistake, which will repair the damage done by a more pernicious.

29. But our business here is not with the Philosopher to concern ourselves about what he rejects or approves: we are to examine the Christian doctrines, and penetrate if we can into the true spirit and design of them. It has been already suggested, that the point driven at therein was to bring men to a just apprehension of their Maker, and the relation they stand in to him: and this is confirmed by many passages of Scripture. Christ has declared that he came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; that

that the love of God is one of the two hinges whereon hang all the law and the prophets; that we must strive to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; and has taught us to pray, Our Father, which art in heaven, thy kingdom come, thy Will be done; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever, all which are elsewhere comprised in the expression of coming to the Father.

Nevertheless, there are multitudes of texts which promise Salvation upon coming to the Son, upon believing that Jesus is the Christ; how then shall we reconcile this seeming discordance? We cannot be safe without coming to the Father; yet we may be made safe by adherence to the Son? I need only one citation to solve this difficulty: No man can come to the Father but through the Son? So that Faith in Christ gives assurance of Salvation as being the remote cause of it, because he is the way and the door, by which we may certainly arrive thereat: for whoever sincerely and heartily believes in the Son, shall infallibly find access to the Father. Were it possible to disjoin a true Faith in Christ from the love of God, it would not avail alone: for many shall say in the last day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name

name done many wonderful works: yet if they have not done the will of the Father, but were workers of iniquity, they shall be rejected. It seems scarce credible to have ever happened in fact, that persons, possessed of so high a degree of faith as to cast out devils, which was a pitch the first disciples could not rise to, should yet continue workers of iniquity: but this was a case put in speculation to shew us that the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, without natural Religion in that perfection whereto they were calculated to raise it, will obtain a passport for no man: wherefore the latter still remains the sole proximate cause of Salvation, and the end whereto the Gospel was designed to conduct us.

30. But what is to be understood by coming to the Father? Not a loco-motion surely: for that were superfluous. God is omnipresent, existing substantially throughout the whole infinitude of space: he is close to us, within us, and round about us; so that we should be never the nearer to him for any change of place. But this is a philosophical idea: the plain man apprehends him to live a great way off, some hundred of miles up above in the clouds. Be it so: then what mountains shall we climb, what springs, what carriages, what wings shall we procure to get to him? The expression therefore is evidently figurative, and

and we must search for the thing signified by the figure. The Scripture informs us, He that cometh to God must believe that he is, must have his mind possessed with a sense of his almighty power and dominion: yet this alone will not suffice: he must believe likewise that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, that is, must be penetrated with a persuasion of the divine Providence, Protection, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, and other Attributes. For if he leaves any of them out, he will be liable to fancy God an unconcerned spectator of sublunary affairs, or unskilful to manage them compleatly, or a rewarder of none, or that he rewards all indifferently whether they seek him or no. Which Coming, as above explained, is expressed in other places by the beatific vision, seeing God as he is, beholding him face to face, knowing even as also we are known.

There is still another expression, if not directly containing, yet conducting to the same sense. Those upon whom the sentence was pronounced, Depart from me, were workers of iniquity, persons who had neglected to do the Will of the Father, and therefore incapable of access to Christ, or through the sole passage opened by his intercession to the Father. Now we know our actions are all shaped by our Will, and the Will is constantly

stantly determined by motives and desires occurring to the thought: wherefore the sentiments of mind figured by Coming and Seeing, must be sentiments of the heart as well as of the understanding. It is not merely right and sound speculative opinion that will answer the purpose, unless it touch our sensibility, and give a right turn to the affections: for they must bring our ideal causes or opinions to become motives of action. When we can discern something inviting and desirable in the things we know, some profit to be worked from them, it will raise a dependence, an expectation and appetence, which must keep the thoughts steadily attentive to their object, and determine the Will to put in practice the means as they severally occur, for making the profit.

But as the wind cannot blow contrary ways at once, so neither can the affections take their right turn while attached to objects of sense, and gratification of the desires excited thereby; wherefore those must be removed from our attention, the soul be purged from all foulness cast upon her by the gross, corporeal machine, the darkness of earthly fumes dispersed away from her mental eye before she can attain a clearness of vision. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; Without holiness no man can see the Lord; and we are exhorted

exhorted to die unto the world, to put off the old man, to subdue the fleshly lusts, that is, the impulses of our inferior faculties, in order that we may have our conversation in heaven.

Nevertheless, while in this world we cannot have our conversation altogether there, for the necessary cares of life will claim large intervals of our attention: yet may we obtain some intercourses by prayer, and meditation, or a little serious reflection: We cannot now see God face to face, but as in a glass, darkly, and the dust and smoke of earth will continually throw a foulness upon our glass: yet may we keep ourselves watchful to brush off the soil as fast as falling, and not suffer it to gather in pitchy blotches upon the surface. We cannot gain a near access to the Father, for the world and the flesh will continually retard our progress: yet we may hold ourselves in readiness to improve every opportunity that shall offer to advance a little onward in the way that has been opened for us.

31. We have now found what was the main scope and design aimed at in the Christian dispensation, namely to bring us compleatly to the Father in some future stage of our existence, and to forward us thitherward during our time of life, with as much speed as the cumbrance of our mortal bodies, the avocations of earthly concerns, and opposition of

the world shall leave practicable. It remains next to enquire, by what steps the prosecution of this design is carried on.

Here enmity and zeal combine to lead into the same mistake: both look for the benefits of Christ's mission in an encrease of knowledge, and the discovery of new truths: both rest their cause upon this point, and join issue upon the matter of fact. One insists that no improvement has been made in science, that nothing is to be learnt from Revelation except a few mysterious assertions, which, if true, would add nothing to the stock of knowledge. The other avers that life and immortality were first discovered in the Gospel; that till then mankind lay under darkness and ignorance, the wisdom of the wise being nothing better than delusion, error, and trifle, that light and truth sprang forth by Christ, and without him we should scarce have known whether two and two make four.

Whereas this is placing the thing upon a wrong bottom, for the merits of Christ and his Religion do not lie in discoveries of science, not even that respecting life and manners: he came not to make us more knowing, but better men. The world knew enough before to have answered their necessary purposes, and if every one in it had lived up to what he knew, it would have been a happy

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and paradisiacal world: for the eternal power and Godhead were manifest in the works of the creation, but when men knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, not by a failure of light, but because they shut their eyes against it. The defect of human Nature lies solely in the weakness of the Will to resist the impulses of appetite, or restrain the rovings of imagination: it does not want quicker faculties; nor additional beams of light, but strength and alertness to make all advantages of those it has. For we have seen that Wisdom, as synonymous with Prudence, or Rectitude, or Righteousness, consists in a sensibility of the heart, and readiness of the Will to follow constantly whatever shall be discerned expedient in the judgment. This imbecility then, destroying the soundness of Wisdom or full health of the mind, was the disorder which the Gospel was given to cure: no wonder then it should apply no remedies to those parts in the constitution where they were not wanted. Upon which account it was termed foolishness by the Greeks, and I suppose is still counted so by some moderns, who, like them, expect to find some profound secrets of Philosophy laid open. But it is no disparagement of the Gospel to allow, that

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no such treasures are contained there, nor any thing new revealed, unless some articles peculiar to its own plan, as the utter inability of human Nature ever to rescue itself from the wretchedness oppressing it, the distinction of Persons in the Deity, the hypostatic Union, effusions of the Holy Spirit, and such like.

Not that I deny it has in consequence produced an improvement of our knowledge: we may see in the Chapter on Economy, comparing § 13 and 20, how much sounder notions the plain Christian entertains even of Theology and Natural Religion, than the ancient Philosopher. For an enlargement of knowledge will ensue upon a due exercise of the faculties, without any fresh information from elsewhere. So that the sacred oracles were not issued to teach, but put us in a way of finding out for ourselves, by raising a concern and ardency for the discovery of salutary truths, turning the thoughts into profitable trains of reflection, uniting us in the same courses of thinking, and quickening our diligence in the pursuit of them.

These were the salutary remedies wanted in the distempered condition of our Nature. It is true, our knowledge is scanty at best, and our rational faculties imperfect; but imperfection is not the same thing with disease.

Our

Our disorder lies in a sluggish indolence, unless roused by some passion, an insensibility to our own interests ever so little remote, and a perpetual misapplication of our powers. We act foolishly and madly; but ignorance is not folly nor madness. He that snatches up the copper handle of a tea kettle, and burns his fingers, deserves our compassion rather than our censure; but if he catches hold on a red hot iron, where he can see the heat, we shall chide him for being a fool and a madman. So it is the sensitive faculties that want to be rectified; imagination and appetite to be disciplined and turned into their proper courses: which they are much better thrown into by reverence and authority, than by reasoning; for they are like the deaf-adder, which heareth not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

Therefore we find Jesus always speaking with authority, not as the Scribes; the Scribe, who was expounder of the Law, and the Philosopher, expounder of the Law of Nature, could only lay their observations upon both before the audience, submitting to their judgment, whether the reasonings thereupon were just: but it is too much trouble to go through with such an examination; the hearer comes only to hear, or perhaps to judge upon inspection, not to reflect or consider for himself;

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so the reasonings missing the sanction of his own judgment, cannot have their proper force. But the style of Jesus ran otherwise, I and the Father are one; I speak not of myself, but from him that sent me, whoso keepeth my sayings, shall not taste of death. Here is no trouble needful to examine or reflect: the sound received through the ears will impress its ideas with sufficient force upon the mind.

There are many excellent sentiments of God and morality interspersed in the writings of the ancients; but those writings are studied by few, and read chiefly for curiosity and amusement, regarded as ingenious compositions, shewing a sagacity and justness of thought in the authors. They may make some impression in the reading, which quickly dies away again upon laying the book aside; as Tully tells us was his case with respect to Plato upon the Immortality of the Soul. Whereas the Testament is the first book we are taught to read, to receive as the oracle of God, containing the way to Salvation, which at our utmost peril we must not disregard, and the truth whereof it is a sin to doubt; therefore whatever is drawn from thence comes accompanied with a reverence and idea of high importance, which give a force to the impression. Let a man take for his thesis

the Stoical maxim, Things out of our power are nothing to us, and descant upon the imprudence of solicitude and anxiety for future events which we can no ways prevent or provide against, it will not work the effects which the very same discourse might do, pronounced from the pulpit, upon the text, Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and interlarded with other texts of similar import.

Thus the Gospel operates to our benefit chiefly by its sacredness, and having the authority of a law established in heaven: which authority must depend upon our reverence of the Lawgiver. Wherefore it is that we are so continually exhorted to believe in the name of Jesus; that God hath given him a name above all other names, whether of things in heaven or upon earth below, or things under the earth; that there resided a Divinity within him, that his words were the words of God, and his acts the acts of God, in the performance whereof his human powers were only instrumental.

This I take to be the fundamental article of Christian Faith: if there are other articles whereof it is pronounced, This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly, it must be because they were necessary to protect and establish the principal: for if it

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were possible for any man fully and heartily to acknowledge the authority of the Gospel and of the Church, although through some misapprehension he should fall deficient with respect to the other particulars enumerated, I humbly apprehend that Athanasius himself would not anathematize him.

33. We are now come to the rock whereon Christ erected his Church, when he gave Simon the appellation of Peter; the stone which the builders refused, but is become the head stone of the corner: which we find to be the authority of a great name, supereminent above all other names, entitling the owner to say with truth and propriety, I and the Father are one. And this leads to the necessity of that greatest interposition of Omnipotence, the descent of the Son of God upon earth to take upon him our human Nature, or Union of the Deity with the Soul of a man, as herein before explained. For the authority of a name cannot be firmly established, so as to become the corner stone of a durable building, unless by a real character in the person assuming it.

We are bred up from our childhood in a reverence for Jesus, whom whenever we have occasion to speak of we call Christ, or our Saviour, and should esteem it blasphemy in any one to drop a hint of his being a mere

man, such as Socrates or Moses. But education only transmits opinions, which must have derived originally from some other source. I do not deny that the prophecies and miracles upon record opened an ample source of evidence to the first disciples: yet they could not have gained an unreserved credit to the words and example of one in whom any misapprehension or misbehaviour had been observed. And for such of our moderns as are willing to examine the principles instilled into them, the external evidence being unavoidably abated in its force by great distance of time and change of language, they are less likely to be satisfied without a character of wisdom running uniform throughout both in the Religion and the Instituter. For though Wisdom, in the sense I have used it all along, does not necessarily imply a compleat knowledge of every thing, yet it does imply an exact discernment of the knowledge it has, so as to distinguish unerringly what lies within its compass, and what does not: therefore we may trust unreservedly to the words and example of the perfect Wise-man, because he will assert nothing but what he certainly knows to be true, and exhibit nothing as a pattern for imitation, whereof he does not clearly discern the expedience.

34. There-

34. Therefore the Saviour of Mankind must possess the character of perfect Wisdom, consisting of a full power of endurance and forbearance; he must be a conqueror by a conquest greater than that of the World, the conquest of himself, a compleat victory over all the allurements of sin, and terrors of death. Now this character, elsewhere imaginary, the object only of speculative admiration became realized in Jesus. He was the Lamb without blemish, neither was there guile found in his mouth: his bitterest enemies could find nothing to blame either in his words or actions, though they sought it diligently, and with all their artifices; and when bent upon his destruction, they could compass it no otherwise than by a false interpretation of his words. He had claimed to be the Son of God, Messiah the Conqueror, in the sense just now described: they resolved to understand it Conqueror of the World, particularly of the Romans; so they made him a rebel against Cæsar, dangerous to the government, one whom no friend of the Emperor could patiently suffer to live.

Yet this Lamb was to be sacrificed as a freewill offering by his own consent: he laid down his life, nor did any man take it from him; and during its continuance he joined temperance and fortitude to innocence. The forty days recess in the wilderness, whether

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you take it as a narration of real facts, or figurative of imaginations suggested in his thoughts, shows him void of ambition, superior to the world with all its glories, and actuated solely by a principle of rectitude, or obedience to the Will of Heaven He was meek and lowly, had not where to lay his head; when reviled, he answered not again; when scourged, buffeted, and spit upon, he endured the pain and the shame without repining; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter; that is, with the quietness, not the ignorance, of a lamb, for he knew it was to be made by a barbarous execution.

Instances perhaps might be produced of people going through great self-denials and sufferings when under influence of some strong desire. Covetousness will make men starve themselves: ambition carry them through incessant toils and dangers: a quick sense of honour or shame will render them insensible of wounds, distresses, and even the terrors of death: revenge will work a total indifference to what becomes of themselves, so they can wreak their resentment upon another. But these are no proofs of a strength in the Will to bear down opposition: it is carried forcibly by the impulse of one more powerful passion overcoming another powerful in a less degree; like a vessel driven by the force of a storm against the torrent of a rapid river.

Therefore

Therefore such exploits display no features in the character of consummate Wisdom, which achieves its arduous works with a calm, deliberate resolution, proceeding steadily against all obstacles upon one uniform plan, in contemplation of their rectitude, their necessary tendency to some important end, and in compliance with the Will of Heaven which orders all things for the best.

35. But such invincible strength of the superior faculties is no where to be found in mortal man; for God in his first formation of human nature, was pleased to give it an imbecility with which it could never gain an absolute dominion over appetite, aversion, and passion: it could only be raised thereto by an interposition of his almighty power joined in union with the manhood. Yet he had so ordered the course of second causes and constitution of human Nature, as that the union was needful to be made only with one man: for the benefits worked thereby would redound to the whole human race, whose Nature in its original constitution had been formed capable of being perfected by instruction, guidance, sympathy, and habit of right of action.

God is not profuse of his Omnipotence: he employs it rarely, upon those occasions only wherein he had rendered it necessary by leaving

ing deficiences in his plan of Nature, purposely to admit these interpositions of his own hand, which he had predetermined from everlasting. Nor yet does he perform his extraordinary works wholly by his own power, but with the concurrence of second causes, turning and keeping them in the course wherein they will naturally bring forth the destined event.

Had this not been his method of proceeding, a mediation and intercession had been superfluous: for he might have changed our Nature from weakness to strength by an immediate operation upon us all. Neither would there have been need of an abiding union even with the one Man: it cannot be doubted that God, by a single exertion of his Omnipotence, the same wherewith he created all substance, could have remoulded him into a perfect creature, singular in its kind, as fancied by the Arians. But he was pleased to employ the natural force of habit for working the alteration, and used his own hand only to preserve that habit from a discontinuance by any single act of sin, which might have caused it to fail of its proper effect. So that without irreverence to our Saviour we may presume, that if the Deity had been withdrawn from his human soul just before entering upon the last trial, he would not have

have had strength to go through it, nor could have verified by his actions what he had expressed in words, Nevertheless, not my Will be done, but thine, O Father. Therefore it was necessary the union should be continued to the last, that he might be able to perfect and support the character of Wisdom or Righteousness, needful for giving an authority and efficacy to the Religion he established, which was by slow degrees to introduce and complete the like character in the whole species.

36. Here we may recal to mind what has been observed in this chapter before, that the reformation proposed, at least in this world, was that of the species in general, not of every individual member; there running such a connection of interests and mutual intercourse among them, that an amendment worked in some, would one time or other spread among the rest: this life being a preparation for the next, and each man fitted therein for the station he will have to occupy, and the functions he will be wanted to perform in the community whereto he is going. Wherefore it may be necessary, that many should die good Christians, though it be not necessary that all should partake here of the righteousness which is by Faith.

From hence let such as claim to be the elect,

elect, the chosen vessels, learn not to conceit themselves peculiar favourites upon that account: for their extraordinary gifts are bestowed for the public good, not for their own sakes; they are but vessels employed to hold the living waters, which are to be distributed among the whole society; the arteries for circulating the blood throughout all the members in the body of Christ. Let them not, like the sons of Zebedee, aspire to a high rank in heaven; but place their glory in being made instruments of blessedness kept in store for the human race. It is natural to wish themselves happy, but let them likewise wish sincerely, that, if possible, every fellow creature might be as happy as themselves.

Hence likewise let the Rationalist learn which way to look for the stream of benefits flowing from the Gospel. Philosophy addresses the studious, the man grown, and the few: Religion the thoughtless, the child, and the many. One holds up light to direct the courses of thought: the other inspires the vigour of warmth to make men think. One applies to the head, which is the ruling power: the other to the heart, which is the executive. The prerogative of Reason lies very low, perpetually overpowered by the rabble of appetites, passions, and opinions: it is in this part our constitution is disordered,

dered, and here it wants amendment. You can never expect to govern steadily without gaining an interest among the populace: and it is well known what influence a great name has upon them; for they readily distinguish one name from another, but they cannot distinguish measures, to see which are beneficial, which pernicious, and which wholly unavailing, good only in speculation.

It is a common shrewd observation, that if men would follow their own reason, they need not mind what parsons preach: this may be very true; and so it is, that if they would perform all their digestions properly, and keep their blood pure, they need not mind the Physician; but this is the very thing for which in a distempered habit the physician is wanted to assist them in doing. But the Rationalist can digest his ideas properly and keep his sentiments pure, nor finds any help in medicine. Be it so: yet his vanity will allow me to say, there are very few of such a happy temperature. Will he then forget that the object had in view was the improvement of mankind in general, that the Gospel was preached to the poor? Therefore it is said, that life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel: not that they were never thought of before, but they were then brought to light when made visible

visible to all by becoming a popular doctrine. Let him suppose Christianity banished from the world; I do not ask what he would lose himself, but what would the world in general be the better?

Nor yet need he be too secure against all damage to his own sweet person: for he ought to know the insinuative force of sympathy and intercourse with other people, whereby the soundest halest constitution may possibly catch an infection by conversing amongst very diseased company. Or if he pronounces this danger purely imaginary, still he may reflect on the benefit he has already received. Can he be sure of having made the same progress, had he been bred up amongst heathens and people of no Religion? Perhaps he might have spent his time in hunting after butterflies, or poking into every puddle for a polypus. The concern for futurity and great importance of right sentiment and behaviour which were the basis and first direction of his industry, were inculcated into him early by those who had received them through the established channels. Nor is it unlikely, that even the absurdities and contradictions he was taught to esteem sacred in the nursery, may have put him upon that careful examination to which he owes all his present science.

So

So that the wisest of us have a personal interest in the general turn of thought prevailing around us: therefore as soon as he shall please to compose a form of rudiments better suited to the capacities of children and the vulgar, than those now current, and satisfy me of its excellence, I will consent to prefer it; provided that till then, he will give me leave to use the Catechisms already put into my hands.

37. It remains to consider by what channels of operation the perfect righteousness, produced in one man by union with the Deity, works to the amendment of the human race; and the first of them has appeared to be, that of authority and name. But name and authority will not avail without something farther, whereto they direct, some particular doctrines and practices they tend to introduce: and such we receive transmitted to us in the Sacred Writings. Which writings carry a derivative authority, as being the main channel connecting nearly with the fountain: like our New-river-head, so called, because it is the head from whence all the pipes are laid to supply our occasions, yet it is but a reservoir of waters derived from higher springs. For Jesus left nothing upon record himself, but instructed his apostles, and made them so fully acquainted with the Spirit of his institution,

stitution, that they could not fail of distinguishing what was conformable thereto, from what was not; neither could they mistake in the grounds there were for the facts they related, or heard related; and it is the persuasion of this spirit constantly possessing them, that gains them the character of inspired writers. Therefore it is not material whether the first Gospel was penned eight, or eight and twenty years after the crucifixion, nor whether we have the original or only a translation: for the whole Canonical Scripture, in its present form, having been extant and current throughout the Church in the times of the Apostles, they must have corrected all errors and misrepresentations, if there had been any; wherefore it derives the full authority of its origin, and is received as the word of God.

This channel takes a different course from that worked out by human reason, because laid out upon different ground: therefore was counted foolishness by the Greeks, who had studied the head, but were unacquainted with the turnings of the human heart. Philosophy proceeds by an improvement of knowledges, by enquiries into the nature of things, from whence will appear what tenor of conduct is most conducive to happiness: therefore classes the virtues under the four Cardinals of Prudence,

dence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice; expecting that when men are once convinced what measures are most prudential, their reason will urge them to pursue them. But it is well known that reason, and judgment, and prudence, however well informed, are feeble powers. Besides that application to the reason can only be made in persons who have attained a competent share of it by exercise and experience; but how will you deal with those who have no reason? Some principles are necessary to be instilled into the vulgar, and children, before they come to the use of reason, to bring them into it, and put them upon the exertion of their faculties. Therefore the Gospel makes a different distribution of Duty into the three theological virtues, of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and impresses an idea of obligation and a zeal, which may introduce them into persons who were not capable of discerning the prudence of them.

I have already given the best explanation I can of those virtues in the three Chapters bearing their titles, and need only add here, that Faith, the foundation of the other two, receives its strength among the generality from the authority of the Scriptures. Wherefore it is a wise provision of the civil government to protect them against attacks, nor is it

it an infringement of our natural liberty; for genuine liberty can never consist in any thing which tends to the disorder and hurt of the community. Calm argumentation upon the construction of them, and liberty of conscience are justly permitted; but open depreciatings and ridicule can do no good, for they operate only upon the passions, therefore cannot improve the understanding, and tend solely to bring back that unconcernedness for the future, and indifference either to right or wrong, which is the great disorder of human nature.

38. Religion, being calculated for the lower part of our human composition, to introduce a law of the mind into such as had none of their own, to discipline Imagination, that it may fall into proper trains, therefore proceeds by methods best adapted to work upon that faculty, that is, by assertion, injunction, form, and institution, rather than dissertation or argument. So that it is an idle question of those who ask, What shall I learn by going to church? for the principal use of going is not so much to learn, as to impress a thorough persuasion of what they had learned before, to stir up an industry and appetite for profitable exercises of their understanding at home; to bring their spontaneous judgments and common apprehensions to run in conformity

formity with their deliberate, and discipline their executive powers, the appetites and habits, to follow steadily the directions of the rational, that so there may be no wavering in their sentiments or conduct, no alternate seasons of discretion and thoughtlessness.

But as I have observed above, that the Scriptures carry a derivative authority, so that of the forms and institutions practised among us comes by a more remote derivation. I do not remember many of them enjoined expressly in the Gospel: there are two Sacraments, and one very short form of prayer; but the particular manner used in performing them, and the observation of Sundays, which seems to come next in sacredness, were no articles in the Code. In these things we copy the usages of the Apostles and primitive Christians, who must be acknowledged to know the mind of their Master; and therefore whatever has the sanction of their example, has the authority of an institution given by him; except in cases where it is visible they modeled their behaviour with a regard to the time and country wherein they lived. For some of their customs, as the love feasts, the community of goods, the ministration of tables by seven deacons, the abstinence from blood, have been long since disused.

The like regard to times and countries, and incidents happening, has created a necessity of compiling several Creeds, and making alterations in our modes of worship, and rules of Church discipline. All which the plain man must take upon the authority of the particular Church whereof Providence has cast his lot to be a member, by causing him to be born and bred in it, or by some natural means working his conversion into it; and the intelligent, too, owes a deference to the same authority for order and expedience sake, as knowing that authority is the main spring employed in the Christian dispensation for the amendment of human nature.

Nevertheless, these regulations being the product of man's judgment, must be liable, and are known in fact to differ much from one another: yet this need not break the unity of the Church, nor abate our Christian charity for all the several branches of it whereon we do not grow ourselves, as the hand varying in shape from the feet, and the knee lying remote from the forehead, does not destroy the unity of the human body, for the whole composition is called an Individual, because actuated in all its members by one and the same Spirit. In like manner, Christians of all denominations, if they mean not to be of Paul, or of Apollos, but of Christ, that

that is, not to place their Salvation in forms and ceremonies and speculative points of belief, but honestly to search out the design aimed at, and methods of attaining it pursued throughout the Gospel, will find themselves actuated by the same spirit of a steady, unboisterous zeal for advancing daily in the three theological virtues, as being the sole and certain way of coming to the Father.

39. We have observed in a former place, that as in heathen ethics Wisdom stands for that consummate character possessing all the virtues, so in Christian language, Faith is often employed to express that full degree of perfection attainable in this world. Nevertheless, when we consider Faith distinctly in its primary signification, we shall not find it to be the saving principle: it gives us an entrance upon our journey, but it is by Hope and Charity that we come to the Father; wherefore love to God and to our neighbour are declared to be the fulfilling of the Law, that is, all the Laws, of Moses, of Nature, and of the Gospel. The love of God, as I have endeavoured to shew in the chapter on Charity, is not a love of affection, or desire of procuring profit or pleasure to its object, for that we are incapable of ever effecting, but a filial love of dependance and resting our expectations upon his providence, his

wisdom, his mercy, and goodness; and this may well be styled Hope.

The glowing Hope of the Apostles and primitive Christians, which made them long for their dissolution that they might be with Christ, was necessary to support them under the cruel distresses and persecutions whereto they were perpetually liable; but to us, whom God has blessed with a more peaceable situation, such an eagerness might be mischievous, as it might beget an impatience which would draw us off from all proper attention to the duties of our station. The love of life is implanted in us for our preservation, it is unnatural to loath it, and those who would press such a disposition of mind as a duty upon their followers, only teach them to dissemble with themselves; or if the profession be real, it must have become so by their being driven into such austerities and labours of devotion, such a tastelessness of all innocent enjoyments, such a contempt and aversion for their fellow-creatures in the world around them, as has made their lives a burden to them.

Yet we all know, that our lives will not last always, and it is no small benefit to have a comfortable prospect beyond. Our Religion has taught us that this life is preparatory to the next, that all evils befalling in it, otherwise

otherwise than through our own wilful misconduct, will terminate in our greater good, and that God has graciously furnished us with means of making it the preparation for a happy state. Here then is a fit object for calm and soothing hope to fasten upon, which may become one of the main springs to actuate our motions: we may rejoice in the lawful pleasures afforded us, as being an earnest of that Bounty from whence we expect greater joys, we may feel a sensible satisfaction in every right performance of our religious duties, and even of our little offices in common life, which advance us continually onward in the way we wish.

And when we consider, there is one common Father of all, who is no respecter of persons, but good, and gracious, and equal to all; who has connected the interest of his children so that the whole body of Christ must be perfected before any individual member can become compleatly happy, our Hope will grow into universal Charity. If we fancy ourselves possessed of any extraordinary talents or gifts, we shall regard them as deposits entrusted in our hands, to be improved for the benefit of the community, from whose advantage alone we can expect to reap any ourselves: so that in labouring the Salvation of others, we labour for our own, and every little

little good or pleasure done to our neighbour will in consequence redound to the doer. Such apprehensions must keep us in perfect charity with all men, not only with the household of Faith, but all others too, without exception even of aliens, worldly-minded, sensual, slanderers, enemies, and persecutors.

Without a competent mixture of these virtues, Faith is an unavailing form, a mere dead carcase, like the dust of the ground, when God first formed it into a human body; but they are the breath of life, which, being breathed thereinto make it become a living soul, and manifest its vigour by continual efforts to push forth more fruit of good works than these sublunary climes can ripen.

40. Nevertheless, Faith, being the foundation whereon to build unto edification, demands the first cares of the builder to work it strong. If there were a solid bottom of rational conviction, this would be the best ground to lay the foundation upon; but this not being to be had among the generality, it must rest upon the authority of churches, and creeds, and canons, and customs; like the houses of Amsterdam, which are reported to stand upon piles driven deep into the quagmire. And perhaps the most intelligent may not produce so firm a soil unyielding to pressure, as to render the expedient of piles needless

less for giving it a greater consistency, that the building above may never sink, nor slide, nor totter.

But the corner-stone is not the whole of a foundation: though Faith in Christ be the corner-stone, he has enjoined us farther in John xiv. to keep his sayings, as the distinguishing mark of a disciple, or one that loveth him. So then barely believing that Jesus is Christ, the Redeemer, or even believing his sayings to be true, will not suffice without keeping them in mind, and heartily embracing all the articles of faith contained in them, which go to compleat the foundation. It is for infixing this foundation firmly in all its parts, that our divine services, assemblies, forms and places of worship, ceremonies, and other religious institutions have been provided, and times appointed for the repetition of them. For Faith is a species of persuasion, and we know persuasions are strengthened by forms and customs, concurrence of numbers, external appearances, and frequently repeating the same thing to the ear. Wherefore it is a wrong notion of some people, that the resort to places of devotion is only to learn, and if they do not like the preacher they might as well stay away: if they should learn something there, as it is to be hoped they often may, so much the better; but the practical

practical benefit is done by helping them to keep the sayings they had learned aforetime. Then for the business of learning, I believe many have found experience of greater profit from texts aptly interwoven into a discourse, than they could have made by reading over a chapter in their Bible: for there, as in all other collections of proverbs, apophthegms, and dark sayings, the matters lie so thick, that they crowd into confusion in the thoughts, entangling perpetually with one another, unless drawn out into separate threads, which the eye can run easily along, until it reaches one particular point.

From this view of the sacred offices may be drawn two corollaries. One, that they carry no intrinsic value nor sanctity in themselves, but are valuable only for the preservation and encrease of faith they tend to produce; neither is a man the more religious or acceptable in the sight of God merely for his assiduities or fervors in them, but for the proficiency he makes by their aid in strengthening his faith, and compleating it by addition of the two other virtues. The other conclusion is that their rectitude and propriety may be tried by observation of the effects they work upon the practisers. If chanting and organs are found to infuse a notion into the populace that God Almighty is delighted

or put into better humour with music, they ought certainly to be torn from our services, as a rag of Popery; but if no such fancy is entertained by those who use them, who do it only because finding their minds lifted to a greater heartiness in their devotions when accompanied therewith, why should they be pronounced superstitious, while contributing to answer the main end of divine services, that of working upon the heart? It is as much superstition to imagine that God will not receive our thanksgivings when offered in an harmonious sound, as that he will not receive them without. For he looks into the secret recesses of the heart, and tries the reins, nor is moved this way or that by any undulations of air, whether finely or coarsely modulated. But it is too common for people to judge of others by themselves: if they have been inured from their childhood to dull forms of devotion and rude screamings, they think every thing shocking which is shocking to their ears, not considering that they bring with them that cast of mind, which vitiates the performance. Like persons who, having contracted a nausea for the dishes of foreign countries by being long accustomed to others of a contrary savour, will pronounce a meat unwholesome, because it sets their stomachs a kecking.

However,

However, since the same causes operate differently upon different subjects, and tastes are known to alter, therefore forms and ceremonies must be altered too, to accommodate them to the changes prevailing among a people, for preserving their efficacy to answer the purpose intended by them. We may learn from history, there were some which have been actually changed: the love feasts, the trine immersion, exorcism of the devil before baptism, practised in the primitive times, are now become obsolete; because they would be improper among us, and more likely to prove obstructions to our Faith, than means of confirming it.

Yet are such changes to be made sparingly and cautiously, as being always attended with some inconvenience or hazard: for we must remember, that forms derive their weight from their authority, which is mightily strengthened by long usage. Although no human institutions are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be broken, there requires great judgment and discretion to see when the mischiefs of adhering to them are greater than the inconveniencies of breaking through them, and great management to gain a new custom equal credit with the old ones. When needful, it had better be introduced gently and gradually; for all sudden revolutions,

revolutions, whether in Church or State, leave a party subsisting to struggle for the restoration of what has been abolished.

41. The Gospel, we have seen, proceeds altogether by way of authority and injunction, yet of reason; by drawing the affections into a holy turn, not by directing the understanding how to strike out new discoveries in science. From whence some have unwarily concluded, that it and human reason are mortal enemies, so that every free exercise of the latter is a departure from the faith, the mark of a dangerous character not to be consorted with. It is true, the loudest pretenders to Reason, who take her name in vain, are dangerous persons, for they deal wholly in cavil, objection, and unsettling the minds of men; but genuine Reason teaches her votaries to build up rather than pull down, to gather lights for the dispersion of darkness and confusion, to aim at some improvement of the mind, nor ever to overthrow, unless when some obstacle stands directly in the way of her salutary plans. Wherefore it does not follow, that because Religion and Reason do not always use each other's assistance (for I hope to shew they frequently do), they must act in opposition: for they have their distinct provinces, make application

application to different persons, and aim at different purposes not inconsistent with one another.

The Gospel was preached to the poor or the populace, calculated upon their level; it pursues solely and steadily one point, the advancement of Faith, understood in the most comprehensive sense, as including the two associate virtues; it meddles not with the three branches of Philosophy, Nature, Logic, and Ethics, any farther than while relative to its own design; nor interferes in matters of speculation either to recommend or condemn them, but leaves all these things to those natural lights, which God and Providence have distributed among mankind.

There is a remarkable instance of this in the case of the man born blind, who was miraculously brought to his sight. The commentators agree, that the doctrine of pre-existence prevailed much among the Jews, especially the Pharisees, and that the question, Was this man born blind for his own sin or the sin of his parents? was put in order to draw a decision from Jesus upon that point. Now we cannot suppose otherwise than that he, who came to banish all unrighteousness from the thoughts of men, would have declared expressly against that side of the question which

which had been sinful. Therefore from his evading a direct answer, we must undoubtedly conclude, that either opinion was a harmless but unprofitable opinion, having no immediate connection with the purpose of his mission; and that a man is not a whit the better Christian for believing or disbelieving a pre-existent state, but is left at full liberty to judge of it according as his own reason shall direct him.

The same may be said of other speculations whereon the Scriptures are really silent, and acknowledged so to be by men of the soundest judgment, although they seem to overthrow them by speaking in conformity with the language and ideas of the vulgar. The rotundity of the Earth, its diurnal and annual rotation, the Copernican system, the gravitation of all bodies even air and flame, still maintain their ground among the orthodox and religious notwithstanding texts have been cited in times of superstition and blind zeal, to prove them impious and heretical.

And there are other speculations supposed to be proved from Scripture with as little ground as the former were supposed to be overthrown: such as the identity of the body in substance, shape, and size at the Resurrection, the winged bodies of angels, the subterraneous place of hell, the restoration of Paradise,

Paradise, the thousand years kingdom of Christ upon earth, and the like. These things, while entertained as speculations, are innocent, and may be useful, but ought by no means to be contended for as articles of Faith; nor is any thing to be received upon the authority of the Gospel, unless what is necessary to secure the purity of our sentiments and manners, the sole design for which it was promulgated. Whatever else we find there, is to be esteemed figurative or hypothetical, partially useful, adapted to some casts of imagination for helping their progress towards more important points. Thus the speculations last mentioned may bring many persons more readily to conceive the survival of their own persons after death, the existence of other creatures besides and superior to the human, the dismal consequence of wickedness, the restoration of mankind to the happiness from whence they are fallen, and that there are gradations of glory, or more stages of Being than one, to succeed after the present: whereas, to other persons perhaps they might prove misleadings, stumbling-blocks, and sources of endless dispute. Wherefore Figure, Parable, and Hypothesis, whether of sacred writ or human invention, merit attention so far only as found profitable for edification, while they serve as scaffolds

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in raising the building of righteousness in opinion and conduct. I have already desired my hypotheses in the second Volume might be treated in this manner. If any man finds them open his imagination to a clearer conception of things invisible, enlarge his idea of the divine Glory, strenthen his hope, and illustrate the influence of his present conduct in thought, word, and deed, upon his future interests, they can do him no hurt: but if he sees them tending to produce contrary effects, let him pronounce them strange, odd, and whimsical; he may easily overthrow them at a stroke with those two invincible arguments, a laugh and an exclamation.

42. Such being the case with all systems both sacred and profane, which contain matters of universal importance, that they mingle speculations therewith of less general use, seviceable only for gaining a readier reception of the former, it requires judgment and consideration to distinguish the one from the other. Whence it appears that Religion and Reason are so far from being belligerent powers, acting in continual opposition, that they join in alliance, and give mutual assistance to each other. For the characteristic of a truth to be depended upon is its agreeableness to both: so that both unite in securing us against dangerous errors. When the workings of imagination

imagination have led us into some conclusion inconsistent with the main design of the Gospel, we may be sure there has been some fallacy in the course of our reasonings, which it behoves us to revise until we can discover wherein they have been faulty: and when the Scriptures seem to teach a doctrine contrary to reason, we have certainly misinterpreted them, and ought to seek out for a more rational construction.

Many passages, not figurative nor hyperbolical, cannot be understood without careful exercise of our sagacity and judgment. What will you make of the text, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven? I know not what the expression might signify among the Jews, but with us poorness is the same as lowness of spirits, which lies liable to melancholy and despondency, and is the soil least productive of Hope, one of the three Christian virtues, principally conductive to heaven, as anticipating the joys of it. Or if you understand it poor in the graces of the Holy Ghost, surely this can never be deemed a qualification for the blessedness annexed: therefore you must hold up the light of reason, and consider the nature of man, and the nature of things, before you can discern the true sense of the expression.

Nor

Nor is the want of reason's aid always accidental, occasioned by change of language and customs: the Scriptures often vary their own language, and involve matters of different kinds together in the same discourse. If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. The Resurrection of Christ was a literal one: that of the Corinthians, who were still alive, could only be metaphorical: But by ceasing to be Jews or Gentiles they had died to sin and superstition; by becoming Christians they were risen to a life of holiness, to a new set of hopes and desires, different from those which had given life to their actions before; and they were risen with Christ, because the belief of his Resurrection had been the means to work their conversion.

The twenty-fourth Chapter of St. Matthew, together with those of similar purport in the other Evangelists, are acknowledged to treat promiscuously of the destruction of Jerusalem, and end of the world: so that it is not easy to see to which of those great events every particular passage relates, nor possible to ascertain, without considering the nature of the things spoken of. That expression of the stars falling from heaven will be differently understood according to our astronomical theory of their being only meteors

hanging in the air, or vast bodies, much greater than this Earth, stationed at an immense distance. And that of the Son of Man coming in the clouds and gathering his elect from the four quarters of the earth, will receive various interpretations according to the degree of grossness or refinement in our ideas. Besides that, perhaps this passage may not relate to the day of judgment at all, because the gathering is in the next Chapter and other places extended to all nations, including the reprobate as well as the elect.

The Jewish and Christian dispensations are distinguished by the age or world that now is, and that which is to come, by earth and heaven: so that the first act of faith in the Messiah gives immediate entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Salvation denotes sometimes admittance into the Church, as by Baptism; sometimes being upon the right road by faith; sometimes the habitual possession of that righteousness which is by faith; and sometimes a future state of happiness. Son of God is an appellation often given to men: We know not who those sons of God in the Old Testament were, who went in unto the daughters of men and begat giants; but in the New Testament the faithful are promised to be made the Sons of God. St. Luke proves Jesus to be so by deducing his genealogy

logy from Adam, which was the Son of God. It is sometimes synonymous with the Messiah, appropriated to Jesus on account of his conception by the Holy Ghost, or of his union with the Deity, and sometimes applied to God himself, when acting in his second person. Spirit has a multitude of significations: it is the perceptive substance within a man; it is the rational and cogitative faculties, it is a vigour of holiness actuating the motions: it is the true sense and design of a figure or institution, in contradistinction to the dead letter or carnal ordinance; It is the wind; for the text translated, Who maketh his Angels Spirits, might as well be rendered, Who maketh the winds his angels or messengers; and many learned men hold that the Angel who destroyed the host of Senacherib, was a suffocating wind which God sometimes sends to make great havoc in hot countries; it is the grace of God shed upon our hearts enabling us to do good works, or not unfrequently, the Holy Ghost operating to infuse that grace.

There are many other Scripture terms, as well as those of common language, which change their signification according to the stations they occupy: therefore it is a fallacious way of arguing to string a number of texts of similar sound, for it is likely they

may contain very dissimilar substance. Common sense and constant use will direct us how to understand our words in ordinary discourse: but the constant usage of persons among whom we converse, will often mislead and perplex us with respect to the language of holy writ: all the variations there cannot be discerned, nor respectively assigned to their proper places without diligent exercise of our judgment.

'Texts, you say, ought to be explained by one another: this I grant the best method where it can be had; yet even here the rational faculties and rules of argumentation, practised among mankind, are helpful, if not necessary, to make the explanation rightly. But when there is a fluctuation of language, or the same figure pursued throughout in many passages, how shall you come at the true sense, or the thing signified, without the consideration of human Nature, and those conceptions of right and wrong, and of the Supreme Being, which most men agree in? or if you can find a rational construction, why should it not be esteemed the true one?

I have endeavoured in the foregoing Sections to give a specimen of what human reason may do in alliance with the Gospel: with what success must be left to others to judge, but I hope

hope with no mischievous consequence. It has been my aim to show, that several terms of sacred use are figurative, and what they are figurative of, in order to draw the believer from travelling in a kind of fairy land, where all is unnatural, mysterious, and confused; and to rescue our Holy Religion from that appearance of inconsistency, darkness, and contrariety to reason, which has made it a stumbling block to the considerate, and a laughing-stock to the scoffer.

43. Nor does our Religion only admit the alliance of human Reason to protect and defend it against the encroachments of superstition and absurdity, but appears purposely calculated to exercise and excite it. The Law was a compilation of forms and ceremonies to be observed respectively in their appointed manners and times: so the Israelite had nothing more to do than open his Pentateuch and he might see there, what was his duty upon every particular occasion; nothing being left to his discretion, there was no call for his judgment to bestir itself at all. But the parabolical and enigmatic style of the Gospel will not suffer our judgment to lie idle a moment: it rouses us by terrors and the prospect of a glorious reward, to a desire of persevering in the right way; but when we turn over the pages for the steps to be taken,

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we are often presented with a dead letter; the spirit must be fetched forth by application, and industry, and mature digestion. To the running reader some precepts are impossible, Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect; some unnatural, Turn the right cheek to him that has smitten you on the left; others contradictory, Take no thought for the morrow, Lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven; others impracticable, Sell all thou hast and give to the poor; for if all were to sell there could no buyers.

Such difficulties will occur in all treatises on morality and religion, and I believe in none more than in the Gospel; nor perhaps is there any from which a superficial reader is less likely to learn, or, which is worse, more likely to learn what is not true. It abounds in riddles as I have observed before; and a riddle is not designed to supersede, but to whet our sagacity, and urge us to an exertion of our natural faculties. The solution whereof, when attempted by comparing text with text, requires the painful exercise of our understanding, and that sobriety of judgment wherein the perfection of our reasoning faculty consists. But this method of proceeding by comparison will not always answer the purpose: every body knows what various and discordant systems

tems have been striken out among Christians, they all claim to stand upon the authority of Scripture; strings of texts are drawn in plenty, and you are exhorted to compare them with one another. How then can you better determine among them, than by collation with that other word of God, which is written in his works, and taking that for the true interpretation of the texts which appears the most rational and consistent throughout with your experience of human and external Nature? Nor need you want authority for such procedure, derived from John vii. 17; for if you were sincerely willing before to do the Will of God upon the best information to be gotten from other quarters, you shall know of the doctrine whether it come from the same Author.

The Papist perpetually hits you in the teeth with, This is my body: you cannot confront him with opposite texts, for they all, where speaking relatively to this matter, concur in requiring you to eat the fleh and drink the blood, in declaring that the flesh is meat indeed and the blood is drink indeed, that the bread which came down from heaven can alone keep you from starving with hunger and thirst. But being willing to do the Will of God as manifested clearly by the natural lights he has given you, you know of the doctrine

trine that it is not from him; for his word can never be understood in a sense which shall make it abhorrent to reason. So the Papist is refuted by showing the repugnancy of his doctrine to all our natural lights, the absurd consequence of transubstantiation necessarily flowing from it, the contradiction of a body existing in a thousand places at once, and by our knowledge of human Nature making it evident, that a particular diet of the body cannot work an amendment of the mind, which was the sole design of the Gospel.

That passage, Verily I say unto You, that this generation shall not pass until all these things be done, was generally understood among the primitive Christians as relating to the second coming of Christ; therefore they expected it year after year, and St. Paul expresses himself, We who are alive shall be caught up in the clouds together with the resurgents. And it is not by comparison with other passages, but by our knowledge of events, that we now unanimously refer that declaration to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Scripture gives general rules which cannot be particularized for practice without a knowledge drawn from other funds: therefore are to be regarded as Theses for putting the mind into profitable trains of meditation and

and enquiry. It proposes subjects to our consideration, but often leaves it to ourselves what lights we shall strike out, what deductions we shall draw therefrom. It restrains what St. Paul calls the vain babblings of Philosophy, but encourages Philosophy when she can talk patiently for illustrating or enforcing the matters it suggests to her contemplation. Accordingly we may observe, that Philosphy runs in a sounder, steadier, more wholesome channel in the Christian world than it used to do in ancient times, and the human sciences have been made serviceable to advance the purposes of the Gospel. Astronomy displays the magnificence, the glory, the power of our Creator: Metaphysics help us to understand the spiritual essence of our souls, the dominion of Providence over free agents, the independence of the soul upon a corporeal frame for its existence: the study of Man leads to the right understanding, and manifests the expedience of the doctrines and precepts delivered in Holy Writ: the study of Nature discovers the inertness of matter, thereby proving that fundamental article, the Being of a God; and displays his stupendous Wisdom conspicuous in the wonderful variety, and regularity of her courses: and I flatter myself some imperfect sketches may be found in the foregoing

foregoing work, whereby it is shewn that the investigations of human reason are applicable to the services of Religion.

Christ has declared that he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil; by which we cannot understand the ceremonial law, for that he did abolish, but the moral, the same wherein St. Paul tells us the Gentiles were a law unto themselves; for God left not himself without a witness, having displayed his eternal Power and Godhead in the works of the Creation; whereof Man was not the work of least importance to be known by Man. The words of Christ himself do not always profit without a knowledge of human Nature: he has said the Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath, but he has not directed in what particular manner Man should make his uses of it. Therefore we must presume it was upon observation on the wants of mankind requiring some rule to guide their discretion in the disposal of their time, that the first disciples appropriated a certain day in the week for religious exercises, and abstinence from all secular employments.

44. Nevertheless, it must be owned, that Religion and Reason too often do hurt to one another, when like other allies they consult their separate interests preferably to the general;

neral; not considering that the strength of a confederacy lies in unanimity, fidelity, mutual confidence, and steady attachment to the common cause. Now the common cause of both I apprehend to be the amendment of human Nature, which the one endeavours to effect by shewing men what makes for their good, the other by stirring up a zeal to pursue it. But knowledge without zeal is a lifeless carcase, it has eyes to stare with, but no hands to execute; and zeal without knowledge is a wild colt, that keeps galloping about, but makes no way upon the road. When ceasing to act in alliance, the fondness for knowledge damps the ardour of zeal, and zeal hurries on with an impetuosity incapable of looking about: therefore their partizans, being sensible of this, entertain a continual jealousy of one another.

The Rationalist suspects every exhortation to read the Gospel as a design to ensnare him, to debar him the use of thought, to keep him in ignorance, that he may be ductile and governable, and looks upon every serious countenance as a mark of folly and weakness: his vanity makes him forward to shew his opinion of others, thereby obstructing the progress of reason, by setting people against it. The zealot suspects every man who

who presumes to doubt, to examine, to argue, of being a concealed infidel, a secret underminer of things sacred, he abhors the like practices himself, and scorns all explanation or human reasoning; thereby betraying his Religion by running into gross extravagancies and palpable absurdities, which give an easy victory to the adversary.

They are so averse they will not suffer the same language to be spoken among them: you cannot mention the words Righteousness or Sanctity in one company without being thought a canting creature, that loves to talk without a meaning: nor Rectitude or Virtue in another, but you are presently judged a Freethinker. Now I would fain know, where is the difference between the Sanctity of manners ascribed to Marcia in Addison's Cato, and that character which Solomon expresses by a virtuous woman; or between Rectitude and Righteousness, when thoroughly understood. But this both parties seem resolved not to do; so Rectitude remains appropriated to one mistaken notion, and Righteousness to another. Methinks it would be worth while for each to penetrate into the other's ideas, and learn his language, were it only for the sake of making converts: for how can you refute a man unless you understand

derstand him? because else you can never know wherein the error lies that you would convince him of.

And herein I think the Rationalist more blameable than the Devotee, because being generally a man of more learning and thought, he is better master of language, and better able to vest his ideas in any cloathing; and he cannot forget the advantage of appearing in a dress agreeable to the company. I must not exhort him to become all things to all men, if by any means he may gain some; because that being an expression of Parson Paul, he would suspect me of priestcraft; but he must see, from the nature of the thing, that if he can contrive to deliver his own thoughts in Scripture terms, he will be heard with better attention and better profit. Words are but sounds that will take any meaning affixed to them; and styles are only tunes whereto very different odes may be set. I have shewn him just now that I can conform myself to the jocular style of the Freethinker, yet be serious all the while. Why then should he be affrighted at the letters G, R, A, C, E? they are harmless, inoffensive characters, susceptible either of a solid, or superstitious meaning. If then he can affix a rational sense to the term, he will be better able to lead the wanderer by gentle windings into

into a justness of thought, than by using a language unfamiliar to his ear.

45. The method of rational explanation is preferable to that of opposition, yet is that method to be pursued with caution, so far only as the subjects can bear it; for there are some tempers in whom familiarity breeds contempt: they cannot follow the long deduction of consequences by which measures are shewn to be expedient, but the line must be shortened for them, and they must be prevailed upon to take the measures by authority and reverence. But obscurity and mystery often add a sacredness to things: therefore I do not know whether the illustrations hereinbefore attempted of several important Scripture doctrines may be serviceable to every body. It has been remarked already, that if all men would live up invariably to the decisions of their judgment, we should have a happy world; but then it must be their own judgment, such as they are capable of framing: this then is the principal point to be driven at, and new lights to be thrown in only as we find them in a disposition to follow them.

Therefore it will be best to leave men to their own notions of Atonement, Satisfaction, Intercession, and the like, while they see no inconsistencies there, and are not led thereby into

into imaginations destructive of their own peace of mind, or detrimental to the Society they live in; and to stand upon the watch in readiness to clear up any difficulties that may perplex them, or check any deviations that might turn them into pernicious trains of sentiment or conduct.

For the same form of doctrine will not suit every age and country, nor every class of men in the same country alike. In times of ignorance and inconsiderate activity, a mixture of what would be superstition to us is necessary: for I have said in a former place that superstition is relative, the grossest ideas being not such to him who is capable of entertaining no better. The least sense of Religion cannot be maintained without a persuasion of the divine dominion continually over us: this the man of contemplation discerns in the course of Nature, for he knows that her works are the works of God, who gave her powers and planned her operations with exact knowledge of every minutest event they should produce, so he sees God continually before him in the productions of second causes. But the plain man cannot comprehend this; therefore we must permit him to imagine frequent interpositions in the growth of corn, the changes of weather, the actions of mankind, or he will think himself

abandoned

abandoned to the necessary agency of matter and motion, or the caprices of chance.

46. Therefore it would become the Rationalist, who complains so loudly of the headiness and hastiness of zeal, to beware of falling into the like error himself, and not be too hasty in eradicating the evil weed of superstition, before he has examined whether the roots of corn be not so intermatted with it, that he shall pluck up both together. But perhaps it is not an evil weed in the soil where it grows; it may be not superstition, but a compendious method of apprehending that which a narrow imagination cannot contain at large, a joining the act of God with the productions of Nature or Fortune, when the eye is not strong enough to run along the line of second causes, between a figurative representation by sensible images of things that cannot be comprehended in the abstract.

And let him keep an eye upon another plant which sometimes proves a noxious weed, and that is the habit of jesting and ridicule: for if a sacred dread makes one heady, a fondness for wit makes one giddy. Both are serviceable in a certain degree, but mischievous when redundant, when not managed with discretion and confined to their proper places; for it is not uncommon that the same plants

plants deserve cultivation in one place, but require weeding out from another. We sow fields of oats with care and cost, but are very sorry to see them among our wheat: the scarlet poppy, and sun-resembling marigold, which burn up our corn, are esteemed ornaments in our gardens: the carpet-woven grass that beautifies our lawns, must be extirpated from our fallows by frequent and toilsome ploughings.

But superstition is not always a distinct plant, it is sometimes like the green leaves of corn, which protect and assist to draw up nourishment into the spire, and will wither away of themselves as that grows towards maturity. Therefore a mixture of it, more than we should think needful for our own use, is profitable to young persons, as it serves to restrain the sallies of youth, establishes salutary persuasions, before they can discern solid grounds to build them upon, and will give way and fall off in proportion as reason expands; nay, it helps in the mean while to render her vessels more compact, and strengthen their tone by a little pressure, requiring their continual exertion to overcome it.

The like may be said with respect to young nations which commonly begin in ignorance, rudeness, barbarism, and total disregard to all

virtues not bearing a visible reference to military merit. Therefore the ancient legislators and founders of states have always dealt much in mystery and sacred rite. And the primitive Fathers, in the earliest ages of Christianity, as I have been informed by citations from their remains, for I have no personal acquaintance among them, practised exorcisms, unctions, signatures of the cross, and lustrations by holy water. Perhaps the inventions of Popery, before it was strained up to an absolute dominion over persons, goods, and thoughts, might be needful to spread and enforce Religion, and give air for the seeds of Reason to bud forth. Were the times of our Saxon ancestors renewed upon this land, how glad should we peaceable folks be to have an asylum in some monastery, under protection of Saint Mary, or Saint Peter, or even of Saint Almanachius, provided he had the reputation of working miracles, and setting the Devil upon all who should presume to invade his sanctuary; where we might give full play to our rational faculties in quiet, without perpetual hazard of murder or rapine, or the terrors and ravages of war. Even the mumbling over Pater-nosters and Ave Mary's was some submission to discipline and lifting the thought to things above, which though little enough, still was better than none:

none: nor could the observation, that the greatest droppers of beads were often the worst men, fail to put some persons upon reflection, and enquiring wherein the real essence of Religion consisted, which might open the passage for a little glimpse of the true design in the coming of Christ.

But now, God be thanked, the world is more enlightened, so that we want not so much of the fiery meteor enwrapt in clouds and darkness. The Reformation has opened a way for the advancement of useful science, and the exercise of sober, unlicentious freedom of thought: whereby the minds of men have been widened to take a larger prospect and observe the symmetry and connection prevailing among the several parts of it made more attentive to rational explanation, and capable of receiving it; so that we can now trace the hand of God through the channel of his providence from remote distances, without the necessity of imagining it constantly close to us. Nevertheless, at all times and in all communities, there will be minds of very various sizes, some contracted by their natural debility, and others by the necessary attention to their professions or situations in life: therefore mystery and unexplained obligation cannot be totally discarded. Pythagoras had his

Tetrachty, his mystic numbers, his symbols. Socrates his Demon, and Tully his system of auguries: which, though rational doctrines in their own minds, yet, as understood by vulgar apprehensions we should esteem highly superstitious.

47. Nor can we still avoid all ambiguity and equivocal language, which exhibits a very different scene of thought to different imaginations. All sciences and professions have their technical terms, their several rules of proceeding and modes of instruction, unintelligible except to the practiser: law, physic, mathematics, even commerce, manufacture, and the mechanic arts, are not without their mysteries; nor does politics abound in them the least of any. In popular assemblies the orator does not always give you the true reasons for the measure he would persuade you to follow, he prefers such as he judges most likely to prevail, and herein he acts honestly, provided the ultimate end of his aim be honest; for in this case the end crowns the work. If indeed he would bring you to his own point for serving his private interests under specious pretence of the public good, I have nothing to say in his justification; but if his point be salutary, it is laudable to employ the most effectual means

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of attaining it, although they should be very different from those which had prevailed upon himself to desire it.

In like manner it behoves the discourser upon religious matters to consider the importance of his principal point in view, and then to conduct those to whom he addresses along such tracks in their imagination as he shall find practicable, taking good caution that in his necessary deviations from the solid road of reason he does not tear up the ground of any cross paths whereby they might be debarred access to some other point equally important: for Tully advises to be guarded on all quarters, and attentive to do the cause no detriment through eagerness to serve it.

But there are many subordinate points tending in order successively to one another, and it is of importance to distinguish the intermediate from the ultimate: which to do requires a piercing eye to reach through the whole line, and an extensive judgment to take in the plan of all their connections. There is a multitude of labourers in the vineyard, as well volunteers in dissertations and essays, as retained servants entered upon the steward's roll: and it cannot be expected they should all have an equal quickness of optics or compass of understanding; nor is it needful. For a very few merchants suffice

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to import the heavenly wares from the countries producing them, the Scriptures and the fields of Nature: it is the retailer and petty shop-keeper, dispersed every where, that must supply the demands of the public. Importation is not their business, but to resort to the warehouse, and retail out the goods as received from thence: only taking care to enquire the general character of the merchant they deal with, for some have been known to put false marks upon their bales, being imposed upon by mixtures of things manufactured in the regions of ambition, avarice, contention, vanity, and self-conceit. The misfortune is that we cannot easily know the size of our talents, we are apt to fancy ourselves merchants when by no means qualified for foreign correspondence: like the little Frenchman, squeezed up in a shop of twelve feet by six, who calls himself merchant of snuff, merchant of soap, and candles, and card-matches. Our London company of taylors have a better title to the dignity of merchant by their magnificent hall, capacious to hold all the lords governors of India in general synod assembled.

Yet I do not wish any one to follow implicitly his rules or his precedents: let him use such sagacity and judgment as he has, and make the best improvement he can by them

them with caution and sobriety. If he can penetrate into the reasons and tendencies of his rules, this will keep him to the spirit of them, and enable him to apply them more effectually to particular occasions. And for such as are qualified to discern the whole rationale of the Gospel, and lay it out upon a regular plan, mutually connected in all its parts, they cannot do better than exercise their talents that way. I have contributed my endeavours for the benefit of those among them who may want assistance, or industry, or leisure, or perhaps may profit by my mistakes: for the discovery of an error is one great avenue into truth, which else one might never have thought of, or never apprehended needful to bestow any pains upon.

It can do no man hurt to be fully master of his science, with all its uses, particular purposes to be answered by it, and manners of operation in effecting them; whatever he may communicate to other people: not that I would suppose him niggard of his treasures, nor grudging any fellow-creature the benefit of all he has to bestow, but observant of what each subject is capable of receiving, and keeping to himself whatever he sees would do mischief to another. For what is one man's meat is another man's poison: wherefore the characters of men must be studied, and

and discretion used to distribute what is suitable to the digestion and temperament of the receivers.

I do not hold it needful in these days, and if not needful surely not allowable, to raise any misapprehensions purposely; but people will run into them inadvertently. When taught some important truth or salutary practice, they will be adding imaginations of their own, concerning the grounds supporting the one, or effects immediately produced by the other. I have met with persons who believed the soul immaterial, because we dream in our sleep: and multitudes stand persuaded that the water of baptism directly washes the spiritual part from the corruption derived through Adam. The injudicious zealot, who proceeds by rote and rule, without knowing why, encreases such-like mistakes; for he has fallen into them himself, and will defend them against every one, who attempts to set him right, by strings of detached texts, and calling him heretic or infidel. The injudicious admirer of reason, who takes it to lie solely in criticism, overthrows them with might and main, never reflecting what farther ruins he may cause to follow thereby.

48. But the man of discretion uses his eyes to look around, regarding connection, and

conse-

consequences as well as single objects. Where he finds truth supported by error, he spares the latter for sake of the former: not out of fondness for such kind of support, but until he can provide a better by working up the solid wall, which requires time and patience to lay the stones one by one as you can get them into their places. He knows that overthrow is a very improper method of edification: for spiritual building is the very reverse of common masonry: you must begin on top, and work downwards. The learner must have a bed to lie upon in the first place, so you must contrive him garrets before he can think of the other conveniences of a family: he cannot suspend his action until fully instructed, but must pursue some tenor of conduct immediately, and be doing before he is knowing; therefore you must urge him with rules, and watch opportunities for letting him into the reasons afterwards. In the mean while he will find reasons for himself as he can catch them at hap hazard: these our discerning artificer considers as shorings to sustain the upper story, and knows that to overthrow them all at once must occasion a terrible downfall: so he lets them alone, and goes on calmly with his building down to the chambers and lowest foundation, well knowing the slanting shores will successively drop

of

of themselves as the superincumbent pressure is taken off by having a firmer support to rest upon.

No work can be performed in a masterly manner without continually keeping in view the principal design, and the plan of operation for effecting it: now we have seen the design of the Gospel was to rectify the sentiments, and gain an entire dominion for the rational faculties over the sensitive; and the method employed for this end is by name and authority. For the perfection of the mind consists in a soundness of judgment, and the perfection of human Nature in a due subordination of the inferior powers thereto: but authority is the most effectual means to counterbalance the impulses of appetite, and keep the mind attentive to profitable objects; for one may judge rightly upon trifles, yet the judgment is not sound unless the matters exercised upon are solid and availing. Therefore the principal care to be taken is to preserve this authority in full vigour, and point it from time to time upon the services wanted; to be cautious of weakening it by overstraining, or wasting it upon matters of no moment, or of mischievous tendency.

The sum of our duty may be comprised in two words, Bear and Forbear: this a sense of

of authority and obligation, when strong and lively, can alone enable us to do; our knowledge of their expedience can never raise desire enough to carry us through the task. But endurance and forbearance are not duties in themselves: we were created to enjoy our being, not to live in continual suffering and abstinence. which are then only recommendable when they will secure us from greater suffering, or work an improvement of our happiness: so that we want some direction when to submit to them.

49. This direction the Gospel affords, informing us what to bear and forbear, not in every particular case, which would be impracticable and hurtful, like those tomes of casuistry that have burdened the world in former ages; but by the great examplar of Christ, by the behaviour of his first disciples, and by general precepts, which instead of taking off the trouble of thinking for ourselves excite us to undergo it, and lead our thoughts into profitable trains whereby we may apply those directions to our particular occasions. It contains likewise certain matters of speculation, necessary to establish its authority and regulate our opinions, without which the contents spoken of before, could not have proved effectual, because it is well known how much our opinions influence our actions. I need

instance

instance only in the belief of a Resurrection and future judgment, which is the grand spring or primum mobile of what cares we do take in shaping our conduct.

Both these systems will take very various forms and colours in the imaginations of different persons: they will run into misapprehensions and mistakes concerning them, which it behoves such as are able, to obviate, or cure as far as practicable without injury to the sounder parts. For circumspection is needful here: the shoe must be suited to the foot; the diet accommodated to the constitution and temperature of the body. St. Paul tells us there is meat for men and milk for babes, which is a caution to consult digestions in providing for the ordinary. The stomachs of our remote forefathers seem to have been very weak, their vigour running all into their muscles, which made them such fighting fellows: the Reformation helped to encrease the concoctive powers considerably; and the allowance to liberty of conscience and sober argumentation has I think still farther strengthened the digestion among our people in general. Wherefore it must be injudicious to adhere too strictly to forms of expression used in old constitutions and articles, for this is bringing us back to our pap again: and those Creeds and Catechisms are best

best which are most simple and concise, because they will bear digesting into different nutricious juices such as the body shall require, and preserve an external conformity notwithstanding a variety of inward sentiments.

Yet robust as we may think ourselves, there are still many gradations of vigour among us, which require as many various aliments, from the whey, the milk, the strong broths, the chicken, the veal, up to the salted buttock: and sometimes the craving is not satisfied with meats alone, for as the ostrich helps her digestion by swallowing stones which would destroy it in the human kind, so to some few persons, who, like animals of the winged tribe, have corneous stomachs, the niceties of abstraction and knotty speculations, though not meat themselves, assist them in grinding their meat. All which makes it difficult to know how to deal with people: for if you offer a viand ever so little softer than their accustomed diet, they are affronted at your treating them like children, and despise you for an enthusiast; if ever so little stronger, they think you have a design to circumvent them, and detest you for an infidel. And in discourses given out to public inspection, it is not always easy to escape the hazard of being accounted bigot and freethinker, for the

the same performance. I have already been told my former volumes have been suspected of freethinking, and am under some tremors lest, if this volume should ever go forth, it may draw upon me a contrary charge: but I am not conscious of any change in sentiment; I seem to myself to have delivered the same substance all along, only translated into the two different languages of Philosophy and Scripture.

Another difficulty springs from the indiscretion of others; there are folks with whom substantial meat might not disagree, yet you dare not trust them with it, because they are like a child that is fond of telling all it knows, and would divulge a taste you desire to conceal because it might draw some ignorant person to swallow an unwholesome food: I have formerly played at back-gammon on Sundays, one hand against the other; I never do it now because I do not like it, but should make no scruple of doing it: yet should scruple to play with any body else, for fear he might tattle, or we be overheard; not, for sake of gaining the character of a righteous Man, but for the same reason St. Paul gives for advising his pupils to abstain from things they were told had been offered to idols.

50. To make the Religion within us compleat, we must study not only what sentiments

ments and practices belong to the essence of Religion, but likewise what there is in the ways of the world coming nearest to it. For the design of the Gospel is very extensive, no less than the amendment of the human race: and as there are various degrees of amendment to be worked in this life, and various modes of preparation for the next, it regards aliens and strangers as well as the household of Faith. The force of sympathy and intercourse are well known, whereby the Religion of some may cast a tincture of its colours upon many to whom it cannot diffuse the substance. Our Hopes are in Heaven, but the means of attaining them are by universal Charity to our fellow-creatures upon earth, by contributing to the happiness of mankind, which consists in Health, Peace, and Competence in their fullest latitude, as described in the first Chapter of my fifth volume.

Therefore let us stand ever watchful to do the service that is feasible; if we cannot make a man a good Christian, let us try to make him a good a Heathen, a good Jew, a good Freethinker, or at least free from disquietudes or turbulent passions in his own mind, and a useful member of society: though we should not be able to infuse the peculiar articles of our own belief, still it is a point gained if we can infuse those of natural Religion, or public

public spirit, or comuon prudence, resulting therefrom, by any abstractions, argumentations, exhortations, or other methods most likely to succeed.

But there is a saying, Physician, cure thyself, which we may take for an admonition to begin at home, and lay down our own plan of conduct for the lower offices of life as well as the highest, that the whole may be uniform, all the parts aptly joining in concert with one another. For we cannot confine our attention solely to religious matters: some of us who have great leisure may employ it that way more frequently, but we cannot all, nor can any of us always be labouring in the vineyard; for there are the fields, the meadows, the markets, that demand our services elsewhere. God has called us, by the condition of our bodies and circumstances of situation wherein we are placed by his Providence, to cares for our health, for our subsistence, for our families, for the duties of our profession, and even for the recreation and amusement of one another: and in all these we must guide ourselves by certain rules of sobriety, propriety, and discretion, deduced remotely from those of our religion; or else we may prove a scandal to it, and whatever light may be within us will not so shine before men, that they may see any thing thereby

for

for which to glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

51. Then for mankind in general, you cannot expect to instil much of your system into them: many are drawn out of your reach by avocations of providing for their necessary subsistence, by their trades and voyages, and by the magic circle of fashion whirling them perpetually in a giddy round of unavailing trifles; many pre-occupied by some ruling passion for wealth, or fame, or preferment, or popularity. And it is fitting that things should be so: the supply of conveniences for life require it, the keeping up of chearfulness and activity among the indolent require it, commerce and the public service require it: but these avocations afford admission to a very slender pittance, or a few careless thoughts of religion. If you can get a little into them, the more the better, but you must proceed discreetly, watching favourable opportunities; for they are seldom disposed to hear you, or presently cloyed, and if you go to importune them longer or in another manner than they like, you disgust them and will never get their ear afterwards.

I would not in this place remind you of the caution given to beware of throwing your pearls before swine; for that is a word of con-

tempt, and many of those who would refuse your pearls are persons of no contemptible character, but certainly it is waste to throw any thing valuable where it would be left upon the ground: you had better present them with something suitable to their relish, which may turn to good account in their hands.

If St. Paul resolved to know nothing save Christ and him crucified, it was because he was an Apostle called solely to the functions of that sacred office, which lay in magnifying the name of Christ, spreading his authority and inculcating his doctrines: but we are not so appropriated; we stand in a lower station wherein the acquistion of other knowledge will be serviceable, called to every office of Christian Charity, or from which a profit may redound of any sort, or any where among mankind.

It has been shown in the Chapter on Economy, that Providence employs the sciences, the arts, the pursuits, the opinions, guiding the course of affairs relative only to this world, to co-operate with Religion and Philosophy towards perfecting the human race. Many of them have received improvement from men of little Religion and wicked lives, some of whom have been found eminently instrumental in advancing the interests of Religion:

ligion: as witness that great blessing, the Reformation, which was not owing to the piety or virtues of the Monarch. For God uses evil things, and things indifferent, to bring forth good: it would be impious in us to do evil that good might come of it, because we cannot know when it will produce that consequence, therefore ought never to encourage it; but it is highly commendable in us to raise what good we find feasible from those evils we cannot help, or from things indifferent, and to concur with men of private views in working a benefit which was not their motive, and advancing a good purpose whereof they had not the least knowledge or conception.

52. I have now gone through my scheme from the roots to the smallest branches sprouting therefrom. The Rationalist cannot complain of me for amusing him with an unintelligible language and mystery: for he must see it has been my aim all along to unravel mysteries, to find a clear sense of expressions he may have thought unintelligible, and to show the scheme of the Gospel conformable in its most essential parts with that of sound Philosophy. The only difficulty he can boggle at is, that of Nature being made imperfect so as to need the helping hand of its Creator to make it answer the purpose intended in the original plan, and the union of the Deity

with Man: and for that I have prepared him, in the sections above cited in my Chapter on Providence. That stumbling-block once gotten over, he will find all beyond run smoothly in a regular chain of consequences. But if he have an invincible repugnance against all supernatural interposition whatever, I can only send him back to my Chapter on divine Economy, where it has been attemped to do all that can be done for Christianity, considered as an event eminently providential, without aid of miracle, or any thing divine descending from above.

With respect to the orthodox, I am only apprehensive lest they should esteem the very unveiling of mystery indiscreet, because obscurity adds to the sacredness of an object. I know it does so in many cases, but times and countries must be consulted, and it seems to deserve mature consideration, whether the keeping ourselves involved in clouds and darkness in the present age be not more likely to weaken, than fortify the authority of a doctrine. I hope there is nothing in the whole of this Chapter detrimental to the Christian Religion as taught in our Church, but flatter myself there are some hints at least which may prove helpful towards a rational, yet orthodox explanation of some of the most difficult and important doctrines. Those hints I have

I have been enabled to give by my examination into human Nature, the proper ideas of Substance, Identity, Individuality, Union, and other speculations discerned by the light of Nature: which then will appear to have been objects well deserving my labours in the pursuit.

CHAP. XXII.

DIVINE SERVICES.

In the four preceding Chapters we have found frequent use for the Telescope, having distant objects and spacious scenes, no less than those of universal Nature and the fortunes of the whole human species, to contemplate. We have endeavoured to observe the ways of Heaven in the conduct of affairs among mankind from the beginning of recorded time, and by their bearings to discover the ultimate point whereto they tend. We have looked backward and forward tracing the several lines in the plan of Providence, so far as God has been pleased to lay them within the grasp of human comprehension; which we have seen can hold enough to display

play their symmetry and proportion, and to shew them correspondent parts of one great and gracious design. Researches which were not the wanton excursions of vain curiosity or unavailing speculation, but may turn to good profit by making us more sensible of the Goodness and Equity of our almighty Governor, alike beneficent to all his creatures; better satisfied with the lot of our existence, admitting us to our full share of his inexhaustible bounty; better contented under evils we feel or behold, as being sooner or later productive of an incomparably greater advantage to the sufferer.

We then reviewed the stupendous scheme by the light of the Gospel, which discovered to us wheel within wheel, and intricacies of Wisdom undiscerned before. For it appeared now that the Pantology of second causes had been purposely drawn imperfect to leave room for the Divine interpositions: Man being made in weakness, by which he would undoubtedly fall into perpetual misery, nor was there any remedy provided among the laws of Nature for his deliverance. But God in his eternal councils had prepared a remedy, by an exertion of his Omnipotence, whereon he established a plan of Soterialogy for the restoration and perfection of human Nature, to be advanced by gradual progress from

from the foundations of this earth through the next stage of being, and until the final consummation of all things.

But those large ideas are too spacious for every imagination to contain, and too refined for every palate to relish, nor where they do find entrance and reception can they continue long in full strength of impression, or vividness of colour: for the necessary attention to our bodily wants, to the common business of life, our troubles, our passions, and importunate desires, cast a veil around, confining our view to the little spot before us, nor can we raise a concern for any thing beyond the present moment or occurrences of the passing day. A man in pain or sickness has no spirit to handle the Telescope, and in the hurry of business, pleasure or company, has not a thought to spare for the Mundane Soul, or laws of universal nature.

Therefore we must use management with ourselves, and endeavour to work by art what we could not compass by the strength of reason; striving to imprint in lasting characters upon the imagination so much of our contemplative scenes as her coarse canvass can take off, that is, the conclusions resulting therefrom, which when well inculcated make the essence of Faith, and Hope, and Charity. For we may have a lively sense of the

the Power, the Wisdom, the Goodness of God, when we have not in display before us the particulars whereby those Attributes are manifested: we may have an unreserved trust in his Mercy, an acquiescence in every dispensation, a content under evils befalling us without an actual discernment of the manner wherein they operate to our good: we may have a cordial benevolence to our fellow-creatures without an immediate apprehension of the connections whereby their interests are linked with our own. If these sentiments can be fixed upon the imagination by the clear and full convictions of our understanding, I conceive they are likely to be most durable; yet whatever way we can get them to take strong hold there, is well worth the pursuing.

For it may be remembered that the mechanical motions among our ideas bear a large proportion to those excited by premeditated design. Imagination is the seat of our persuasions, conductor for the most part of our actions, and often the employer of our understanding. It is like a house clock, which may be set right now and then by hand upon careful observation of other regulators, but ordinarily is itself the regulator of all business in the family. And this faculty depends altogether upon the condition of our internal machinery,

machinery, which is affected by habit, custom, external appearance, and sensible objects. These things then judiciously applied, may bring it to run spontaneously for a continuance in those trains which the most exalted exercises of our understanding can only throw it into for a while.

2. Most of us, as remarked in the last section of Chapter XX. who live in a private station with no more than common abilities, rarely meet with opportunities of doing an important service either to Religion, or the public, or our neighbours: therefore our business lies almost entirely with ourselves and our own minds, to cultivate such dispositions there as may keep us ever attentive and zealous to labour for the general interest, and the good of others whenever an occasion shall present, and may prepare our internal part to become a fit member in the kingdom of the just.

These dispositions, wherein the theological and moral virtues consist, are best improved by the practice of good works done in pursuance of their impulses: for a man can never strengthen his charity or his public spirit, so much by theory and meditation, as by acts of kindness or real patriotism, where neither fame, nor interest, nor private affection, nor expectation of a return has any share in the deed.

deed. But since we have not a call to such good works, sufficient to keep up our propensity to do them, it would quickly languish and become extinct if expedients were not provided to supply it continually with fuel: therefore certain things indifferent in themselves are enjoined, that we may have an opportunity of exercising our obedience in performing the injunction.

In these consists Religion strictly so called, when distinguished from morality: and they are termed divine services, not that we can suppose them of any service to God, but because being of no direct apparent service either to ourselves or our fellow-creatures, we perform them upon an opinion of their being pleasing in his sight: which gives them a similar efficacy upon our minds with actual good works done upon the same motive of pleasing him. Therefore are they consequentially of important service, both to ourselves and all whom we may have to deal with, as they nourish in us an habitual trust and dependence upon the Almighty: which may ensure us tranquillity of mind in times of difficulty or danger, and beget in us a readiness to that which alone he will esteem a service to himself, the doing good to his creatures, and joining in every general interest wherein he shall be pleased to afford us

an opportunity of becoming in any little degree instrumental.

This then being their design, if we keep this in memory, it will help to direct us in the use and application of them: for we are not to imagine ourselves the better merely for having attended divine services, sermons, private prayer, psalm-singing, reading, meditation, or the like, but for the effect worked by them upon our hearts, in the improvement of any good habitual sentiment there. But that effect will correspond exactly with our management in the exercise of them. If we go through it only to please the world or our superiors, it will be of none avail at all: If we perform the outward actions perfunctorily upon a persuasion of their being duties, it is better than nothing; for every act of obedience, however slovenly paid, will help to fix the sense of a superior power, to whom some duty is owing: yet is it very little better than nothing, as it can beget only a servile dread of a rigorous master, whose orders we must comply with that he may not be angry with us. And if we do our work by starts, or remissly, the effect will be proportionable to the temper wherein we receive it.

Wherefore it behoves us all along in our divine services to endeavour casting our minds into the posture suitable to that speculative

or

or practical virtue, whether trust, or hope, or humility, or self-denial, or prudence, or charity, which they are respectively adapted to encourage: for their operation is not like a charm, by supernatural efficacy, but by mechanical influence of language, gestures, and objects, upon the imagination; and if the Holy Spirit be aiding, it is not so much by giving additional force to the means of grace, as by co-operating with the endeavours of the recipient. But some of our services being considerably long, there are persons who complain they cannot keep up the proper attention throughout: it may then be recommended to select such parts as are most profitable, or they can most heartily join in: however, let them try what they can, and if they really do so, they will do enough. And perhaps the length was calculated for the benefit of such persons as can pick up ten minutes attention here and there out of an hour, who could not carry it on the whole ten minutes at one stretch: if this were the case, we must suppose every generation grows more giddy than the former; for additions have been made every now and then to our offices, but never any retrenchments.

3. But the manner of performing our religious exercises will depend in great measure upon the spirit or motive wherewith we enter

enter upon them, which I conceive had better be that of hope and advantage, than fear or obligation. I am not ignorant that you cannot bring people of no religion into any without suggesting motives of terror and necessity; for Religion has nothing inviting to their palate, by which you might allure them, nor any thing profitable in their estimation by which you might tempt them, because they have no idea of profit unless in the encrease of their possessions, or gratification of their desires and humours. So you must represent it as an indispensable duty, which they must acquit themselves of at their utmost peril: therefore I am not for discarding those engines, as being needful enough with persons and upon occasions, where wanted. But for such as have made any intimacy with Religion, and have tasted the sweets of a rational and regular conduct, a dispassionate, benign, and holy temper of mind, I think they may find more noble inducements to carry them through the exercises that tend to encrease those blessings in them, than the dread of mischief, or thought of a task that must be finished.

Nor do I pretend to deny there is an obligation to those exercises, nor that grievous mischief will ensue upon the omission; but it is not unusual in common life to do things we

we are obliged to, without any thought of the obligation, where we have other incitements starting foremost to the notice. He that passes through a turnpike, must pay the toll, or his horses will be seized; but if the road be very convenient for him, and made safe and smooth from miry and foundrous it was before, the toll comes from him in the nature of a voluntary contribution, nor does he once think of the seizure. He that should behave rudely, indecently, and offensively in company, would run the hazard of being turned out of it, and losing his character: those would be very disagreeable events, yet who of us ever finds occasion to carry them in contemplation? for use and the pleasure and credit of civil deportment engage us to it effectually. In like manner, how obligatory soever the duties of Religion be, while we have a just sense of the benefits accruing from them, this will turn the obligation into matter of choice and prudence, so that we shall escape the danger without thinking of it: we need only reserve our apprehensions as motives lying dormant in the box, ready to assist in the scale at seasons when passion, pleasure, or indolence press so hard upon us that our moral sense becomes too feeble to actuate us alone.

But that Religion has been made so much a task

a task and terror, I apprehend owing to the craft of former ages: for there is nothing like frighting men to make them governable, and to open an easy introduction for gainful superstitions. Our modern enthusiasts, though, perhaps they have not so deep designs as their predecessors, employ the same engine to draw crowded mobs around them. They persuade men that nobody can be saved who does not first believe himself actually in a state of damnation: they have the words perdition, reprobation, hell flames, and eternal torments, perpetually in their mouths: delight to describe the terrors of the last judgment, when the rich and mighty of this world shall be haled about by devils, and mankind in general be overwhelmed in the unfathomable gulph, except a very few of their own followers: yet are these continually liable to be drawn aside among the multitude, unless they neglect their lawful professions to follow lectures and practise austerities prescribed them; so are always kept in the terror of a person walking along the icy brink of a precipice, every moment in danger of falling irrecoverably, if he chance to cast off his eye upon any other object.

These topics of rhetoric might do good service, judiciously applied, would but the professors submit to the government of more discerning

discerning heads than their own, who should put into their hands only the voluptuous, the debauched, the giddy, the gross-minded, and the sanguine, upon whom they might work more powerfully than any rational discourses; but to the flegmatic, the serious, the weak-nerved, and the timorous, with whom Hope is the virtue wherein they are already most deficient, but who I believe make up the gross of their congregations, this regimen is arrant poison, fit only to drive the patient into desperation or madness. In short they too much resemble Doctor Sangrado, who prescribed bleeding and copious draughts of warm water for all distempers, the dropsy and the atrophy, as well as the fever, the surfeit, and the plethora.

Nor are other more reasonable teachers, especially among the sectaries, wholly exempt from the like indiscretion, probably through laziness or incapacity to do better, because fear is the easiest passion for an orator to work upon: and being more fond of producing great effects upon their audience than careful to consider whether those effects be good or bad, they apply to the most sensible part of the human composition. By this management Religion becomes a melancholy burdensome thing, which nobody would submit to if it were not for the dreadful miseries

consequent

consequent upon the neglect of it. The pious are affrighted, instead of being exhorted or persuaded, into their devotions, which vitiates the performance of them; for a man can never do his work so well in a fright, as by a calm and determinate resolution to do his best upon a persuasion of its being for his benefit.

Hence come the anxieties and suspicions of having failed in due reverence and devotion; the sighs and groans, the turned-up eyes and mortified countenances of the godly; which besides the hurt and disquietude it brings upon them, does an injury to Religion itself, by making it the aversion and laughing-stock of the world; and I suppose gave occasion to my Lord Shaftesbury to object, that so much care is taken of our future happiness as to make us throw away all our present. For this were not true of genuine Religion, which though it may sometimes, and that very rarely, require us to sacrifice our private pleasures and interests in its service, yet is there no real act of sound Religion that does not tend to the good order, the benefit, and happiness of mankind in this life. As God loveth a cheerful giver, so is he best pleased with a willing obedience, unforced by the terror of punishment or necessity of obligation. Therefore we serve him most

acceptably when persuaded that thereby we serve ourselves, for he wants nothing of us but that we should embrace the means of improving our nature which he has vouchsafed us.

4. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but perfect love casteth out fear: while the love remains imperfect, and at intervals wherein it cannot raise a glow of warmth enough to set our spirits in motion, we must supply the deficiency by fear; but whatever we can do by love will be much better done than by any other spring. But the love of God, as explained before in the Chapter on Charity, is a different kind of sentiment from that we ought to bear our neighbour: it is not the desire of benefiting the party who is the object of it, for we cannot any where find fuel to feed such a desire; it is a filial dependence upon God as the author of all good, and a well-grounded persuasion that whatever we do with a rational idea of pleasing him will prove most beneficial to ourselves, or the common interest of our fellow-creatures. Yet there are great mistakes in the exhortations to this love: for men are enjoined it as a duty, and threatened with what will happen to them if they fail in it. So fond are some folks of fear, that they would make it do every thing, and extract the

the flame of love out of this chilling principle: which seems an unnatural way of proceeding, not unlike the Virtuoso's scheme, who would needs try to make burning glass of ice.

But affection and persuasion do not lie under our command to raise them in what degree, or turn them upon what objects we please, by mere dint of resolution: so the duty can extend no farther than to the diligent application of the means naturally efficacious to produce them. We cannot possibly fright ourselves into love, nor into the belief of a thing whereof we do not discern the evidence: all that fear can do in this case is to stifle our consciousness of wanting the affection and the belief, that the shame of it may not stare us in the face, which can only tend to teach us an hypocrisy so covert as to deceive our very selves, and thereby prevent our using the proper remedies for curing the sore, because not perceiving that we have one. Love can no otherwise be acquired than by a sense of amiableness in the object, and that sense must spring from a discernment of its tendency to something we desired before. Therefore the only way to make it sincere and hearty is by observation of the benefits accruing to us from Religion,

in improving the serenity of our mind and regularity of our conduct.

By praying to God we encrease our trust and dependence on him, as a sure protection in all situations: by praising him we recal many blessings to our thoughts we should otherwise have overlooked or forgotten, and thereby become better satisfied with our condition: by confession, we grow acquainted with our defects, and which way to apply our cares for curing them: by profession of Faith we inculcate the convictions of our understanding upon our imagination, making them habitual and practical persuasions: by intercession we extend our Charity to all around us, not excepting the worthless and the wicked: by expressions of forgiveness we quench the sparks of revenge, envy, anger, animosity, and all unruly passions that would make havoc in our breasts: by acknowledgment of the Divine Wisdom in bringing forth good out of both good and evil, we find encouragement to the exercise of our little powers, and learn patience under misfortunes, cross accidents, and injuries that fall upon us: by pious resolutions we gather strength to give our judgment the mastery over sudden humour and fond inclination: by compliance with ceremonies we inure ourselves to discipline,

pline, and render our inferior faculties more tractable by the prudential rules of our own reason. To go through every particular would be endless: but we may say in short there is no religious exercise rightly performed, which does not help to improve the growth of some salutary virtue, and no virtue which may not receive nourishment from some religious exercise.

I do not doubt there are many persons who have experienced, that on coming out from their devotions, they feel themselves in a manner new creatures; they seem above the world and all its allurements; they have no sensual desires, nor vanity, nor selfishness, nor resentment, nor ill will to any body; no bias to indulgence and indolence, no repining at their condition, fretfulness at accidents befallen them, nor uneasy dread of dangers whereto human nature is liable: but are inspired with the stoical love of rectitude for its own sake, and could almost do and suffer any thing for the glory they have had in contemplation before them. And though they find those impressions quickly obscured by the common business of life as soon as they begin to engage in it again, yet will they gather some additional strength upon every renewal, until at length they come to have an influence upon the general tenor of mind and

and practice, moulding them into the frame wherein solid happiness and usefulness of character consist. The knowledge of these desirable effects will make them feel a sensible joy on having succeeded in performing their religious duties well, and give them vexation whenever conscious of not having improved their opportunities as they might: which of course must excite an earnest desire to manage better another time, as matter of the highest expedience, and would urge them to their duty, although there were no threatenings annexed to the neglect of it, nor obligation to render it indispensable.

5. Yet when raised above fear by having gotten another principle, enabling us to do our work better without it, there is still a danger to be guarded against, and that is from vanity. There are some people who do not so much desire to be good, as to be better than others; as if Religion was only a secondary aim, to raise our credit with the world or in our own estimation. But this motive will vitiate our performances more than that of the fear we have discarded; for there are few things more opposite to the spirit of Religion than vanity, as being incompatible with Charity, and a hearty zeal for any general interest. The vain man has always a separate interest of his own, which is

is promoted by the ill success of his neighbour, and whoever comes upon a line with him stands in his way: therefore he is perpetually tempted to censure, misconstrue, and depreciate, nor can ever heartily endeavour to improve a virtue in another person, unless in order to boast of his own performance, and triumph over him thereupon; neither will he be secure against the temptation of making a merit of his piety, secretly in his own imagination even with God himself.

But it is very unsafe to be fond of drawing comparisons with others upon any subjects, especially those relating to religious and moral virtues: or scrutinizing into their actions, unless for our own instruction by observing their successes and miscarriages impartially together with the causes of them. The best way will be to consider Religion as a beneficial thing, and study diligently how to make our own advantages of it; never troubling our heads with what other people do, unless as occasion offers to assist them. For we need not be afraid of retarding ourselves by helping another forward: Heaven is big enough to hold us all, nor shall we find a whit the more difficulty in getting in for seeing thousands besides travel with greater speed: on the contrary, since the general interest of the species, in the perfecting human nature,

ture, is to be compleated by the joint labours of multitudes, the more we see setting their hands to the work, and the greater proficiency they make, the better reason we have to rejoice.

And the custom of regarding religious exercises as matter of prudence and advantage, will assist us in adjusting the measure, as well as the manner of them. Not that I would persuade any body to rely solely upon his own judgment in this point, but have a due regard to authority, established usage, example, and recommendation of persons of a judicious piety: but it should be remembered there are extremes on both sides: a man may be righteous over much, as righteousness is understood of assiduities in externals, as well as too little; the learned and pious sometimes have their whims and extravagancies, as well as the beau and the giddy girl; and the circumstances of situation and temperament will make that expedient at one season, which was profitable at another. Every man has some judgment of his own if he will take care to exert it, and though it does not become him to refuse any helps at hand to assist it, yet neither ought he to forbear making the best use of it he can. Therefore it is dangerous to pin an implicit faith upon some particular doctor or writer, because

because his whimsies happen to strike our fancy by tallying with our own: we are not to cry, I am of Paul, nor I of Apollos, but I am of Christ; that is, of that head whom we follow best and serve best, by doing any little real service to his body, or any the smallest member of it; not forgetting our own spiritual part, which is one of his members.

It behoves us to try all things and hold fast by the best, but if we do not try calmly and carefully, we shall run a hazard of holding fast by the worst. Whence it appears highly expedient to exercise what judgment we have, both upon persons and things, observing from time to time what effect our religious exercises produce upon our minds and our manners: for they have no intrinsic value, but it is their tendency alone to work a good effect that makes them duties pleasing to God; we may be a little aukward in making our observations at first, but practice will bring us gradually to be more expert. If then we find they leave none, or a very transient impression behind, if they call us off from the active duties of our station, from our attention to the services we may do one another; if they make us melancholy, desponding, fretful, morose, contemptuous, vain, censorious, or inequitable; if they nourish our indolence under a notion of superseding the

the practical duties by atoning for the omission of them; if they make us too important in our own estimation, urging us to vie with the Apostles and primitive Martyrs, and undertake exploits far above our talents; we may conclude assuredly, that we have been faulty, either in the choice of them, or in the manner or the measure of performing them.

For some of those inconveniences above mentioned will ensue from the excess of devotion, when carried on so long until it becomes a dead form, without any alacrity of mind to give it life: for even our mental functions depend upon the organs of our machinery which can continue their play only for a certain time, and if we go on to force them beyond their strength, they will throw in uneasy sensations, quickly corrupting to all the gloomy and sour humours. It is true, the commerce of the world is apt to render them stiff, so that some force and exertion is necessary to make them do what they can; but it is our business to find out by experience and observation, what they are capable of performing with spirit, beyond which we can expect no service from them either agreeable to God, or profitable to ourselves.

6. But there is one set of religious exercises,

cises, those I mean relating to humiliation, the use of which seems very little understood, and therefore deserves a particular consideration. I believe it is now pretty much out of fashion, because the generality of mankind are too fond of indulgence and thinking highly of themselves, ever to cast their eyes willingly upon an object that may tend to mortify them: but for that very reason it might prove the more serviceable, if they could be prevailed upon once in a while to do it. Those who practise this exercise perhaps are the least susceptible of benefit therefrom, considering the idea wherein they enter upon it, being persons of cold and timorous constitutions, who esteem it their duty to afflict and think the worst of themselves possible; whereby they only encrease the defect in their natural temperament, and persuade themselves that the very act of humiliation without reference to consequences is an acceptible sacrifice. But it is an unworthy notion of the Giver of all blessings, to imagine him delighted with the affliction of his creatures, unless when it tends to their greater benefit: it is then worth while to enquire what are the benefits of humiliation, and whether the same may not be obtained without making it a melancholy and afflicting work.

A man living in some of the back settlements

ments in America, on hearing there is a party of enemy Indians coming that way, will, I suppose, examine carefully into the state and condition of his house, particularly the weak parts of it, inspecting the doors and windows, and searching for any loosened pannel in the walls where they might possibly break in: he will look over all his arms and ammunition, to see what he has in store, and whether there be any rust or damp or defect among them: and all this he will do without taking pains to afflict himself at what he finds amiss, but in order to provide for his necessary defence upon having a thorough knowledge of his wants and his weaknesses.

He that has an infirm constitution will do wisely to make himself well acquained with his particular infirmities; to observe what kind and quantity of diet, what accidents, employments, and exercises have disagreed with him; that he may not think too highly of his stoutness so as to brave weathers, undertake fatigues, or indulge in entertainments that would hurt him. If he vex and fret at being no stouter, it will do him no good either in his health or in the eye of Heaven: nor can the knowledge of his infirmities profit him otherwise than by exciting his vigilance to use every caution against whatever might encrease them, and pursue every regimen

gimen and management that may help to amend them. In like manner it is highly expedient for us, who are all of very crazy constitutions in the internal part, and have dangers and enemies perpetually surrounding us without doors, to take ourselves into close examination, particularly on the worst side of our characters: but we ought to do it impartially, not thinking to merit by making matters worse than they are: for we have gross failings enow to contemplate, and if we dwell too strongly upon the trivial, it is a shrewd presumption we have overlooked the more flagrant.

Nor is there any Religion in trying to afflict ourselves at the discovery: our groanings make no sweet melody among the heavenly choirs, neither can they answer any good end to ourselves unless we be so lumpish a composition as never to stir without the dread of smart, and have no desire for any thing beneficial, nor laudable ambition to rise a little step higher in the scale of virtue. Some displeasure will naturally arise upon the view of our disorders the first time we turn our reflection that way, but he that has been used to the exercise knows beforehand what he is to expect; so his imperfection is nothing new to him that he should be mortified at the discovery: the particular examination of it

it is rather a cheerful work, because giving him hopes that he shall gather information from thence how to proceed in the rectifying it; it is like the search made by a mariner, who knows his ship is leaky, and thinks it the luckiest thing in the world if he can find out all the leaks, because till then he has no chance of stopping them. Therefore he will search industriously into all his corruptions and all his weaknesses, what irregular desires he has, what unruly passions and inveterate habits, in what particular virtues he falls most deficient, wherein he has done amiss, or not so well as he might upon the occasion, what temptations have been most apt to prevail upon him, and what were the real motives of actions for which he has been most forward to applaud himself.

These enquiries will teach him not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, nor to be too secure against attacks, nor yet above improvement; yet neither need they make him despond, as knowing that forewarned is forearmed, and that the sense of his imperfections will bring him within the verge of that protection which will raise him so far above them as is needful in this vale of mortality: they will convince him that he is not a compleatly rational creature, nor entire master of his own thoughts and actions,

therefore must use management with himself and proceed with caution, taking the benefit of whatever helps are afforded him; and will give him a candour, a compassion, and fellow feeling towards imperfections he sees in other persons. Some such examination, I apprehend, would be particularly salutary to the Freethinker, as it might abate his super-abundant self-sufficiency, and his high opinion of human reason, which is his grand infirmity introducing a thousand others: for he runs into errors and absurdities by thinking too highly of himself, and he thinks too highly of himself for want of knowing himself.

But our blemishes and foibles are a very unwelcome prospect, which the eye does not willingly fix upon, but is apt to skim lightly over, unless there be some additional weight besides expedience hung upon the attention to keep it steady to the work. Therefore it is commonly recommended to make this exercise a matter of devotion, and rank it among the divine services: because by placing ourselves more immediately in the presence of God, and drawing out the list of our corruptions as it were for his inspection, we shall be likely to do it more compleatly. For we dare not prevaricate with the Searcher of hearts, and the awe of the divine Majesty before whom we stand, will make us more earnest,

earnest, more honest and impartial in the scrutiny: whereby we may discover lurking corruptions, secret propensities, and many unjustifiable motives, having given the real spring to our most specious performances; which would have escaped us in the ordinary way of meditation without the check of that bridle upon our imagination.

7. Very great stress has been laid upon the duty of fasting, which being a medicine in the spiritual dispensary, the qualities and uses of it deserve to be well considered before it be prescribed. Now I conceive it operates as a damper of the spirits, and weakener of that attachment we have to the common enjoyments and engagements of life: therefore ought to be administered to such patients with whom that intention is requisite to be pursued, and in no greater measure than suffices to answer it.

But there are various degrees of fasting: the abstinence from all food, or from flesh meats, for whole days together, was strongly enjoined in former times, perhaps not so much for the sake of Religion, as to force men by the inconveniences of it to purchase a dispensation with their money: so that he was the best son of the Church, not who starved himself most, but who gave most largely to be excused from the obligation to starve. Such abstinence

abstinence might be very advisable for your turtle eaters, city feast hunters, and persons who live in a continual round of pleasures; but for old women and others who have frequent occasion to converse with their apothecaries, I hold it stark naught: for they have more need of something to raise their spirits than to depress them, and their scruples, despondencies and murmurings, proceed in great measure from poorness of blood or stagnation of the circulating juices, occasioned by the feeble tone of their vessels, want of exercise, or of seasonable recreation; and if they could apply with more glee to their common employments, they might return from them with better alacrity to their devotions.

For my own part; who am of a rather melancholy temperament and cold digestion, I could never reap any benefit from fasting, though I have tried it formerly, but found it enfeeble my understanding, and make me less fit for religious exercises: and had I continued it till this time, I believe my Chapters would have dissolved into a water-gruel style, and been still more deficient than they are in a rational cheerful strain of piety.

Nevertheless, moderation and temperance can do hurt to no man; he may keep a continual fast in this sense with good profit, and

if he rise up now and then with half a meal, he may find himself lighter and more alert for any serious application, at least it will inure his appetites to discipline, and help to give him the command over them; which is the more needful because civility and custom, often laying temptations to excess in the way, it would be doubly dangerous to have a domestic enemy importuning him. As to higher degrees of abstinence, I shall not pretend to decide upon them: since they are strongly recommended, it becomes every man to make the trial; once or twice cannot spoil his constitution, and then he may consult experience, than whom he cannot have a physician of better authority, for the continuing or leaving them off.

But in whatever measure or manner he practises them, it will be expedient he should think them not so much duties in themselves, as means assisting him to perform his other duties the better: for if he regards them as actual services, he may be apt to imagine that after having gone through so laborious a task, he may be allowed a little relaxation from attending to his conduct. This must needs throw him off his guard when entering into the common transactions of life, and then his passions and desires having been kept suspended for awhile, would return upon

upon him with fresh vigour: which might make his case too much resemble that of the man out of whom a devil had been cast, and he returned to his house and found it swept and garnished, and then took unto him seven other devils more wicked than the former, so that his last state was worse than the first.

8. As there are few of our religious exercises which have not a considerable mixture of prayer, it will be worth while to examine into the nature of that species of devotion. Prayer is one of the principal means of grace, and therein lies its whole efficacy. I have endeavoured in the Chapter under that title to explain the idea of Grace considered as an effect worked upon us, which was a disposition of mind to some sentimental or practical virtue, with more than common vigour and alertness: and though we are taught that this cannot be effected without aid of the Holy Spirit, yet he never produces it of himself, but only co-operates with our endeavours to supply their want of strength; therefore some natural means must always be put in use to obtain an effusion of grace.

Now prayer is a serious meditation and expression of our desires in the sight of God, and as it were in conversation with him: we are indeed never really out of his sight dur-

ing any one moment of our lives, though upon common occasions we think nothing of it, nor is it always convenient that we should, therefore can receive no effect therefrom upon ourselves: but when imagining ourselves actually before him, the solemnity of his immediate presence will give an acuteness to our meditations, and a sincerity to our desires, which will make us judge more impartially and soundly than we could otherwise have done, and desire things heartily to which at other times we had a secret reluctance. And since habits are learned by repeated single acts, an assiduity in prayer has a natural tendency to beget virtues in us that could not have been acquired by reason and instruction: in which way alone I apprehend it is that we receive an answer to our prayers.

It is written, Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you: but no expositor ever understood thereby that we should receive indiscriminately whatever we please to ask for. The wisest among us may sometimes ask for things that would be mischievous to them if granted: and though they should confine their requests to increase of grace and virtue, from which there is no hazard of mischief to them, yet the granting it may be improper,

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as frustrating those grand designs of Providence, which we have seen in some preceding Chapters, are worked out by frailties and imperfections among the creatures. Therefore we are taught to understand by the promise, that God will give the devout worshipper what he knows in his wisdom will be good for him, whether contained in the petition or not, so far as is consistent with the good of other creatures with whom he stands connected.

But we cannot believe otherwise than that God, who is the Author of all powers, the fountain of all good things, will of his own free Bounty give unto his creatures all the good that is proper for them, and has already provided measures in his courses of nature and fortune, requisite to produce it: therefore prayer does not operate upon him, but upon ourselves. For there is no room to expect that our importunities should prevail upon him to depart a tittle from the determinations he has made in perfect Wisdom, which comprize every thing, that is to befal us: we are not to look for miraculous interpositions among the motions of matter on our behalf, neither does the office of the Holy Spirit lie in turning the course of events, nor causing alterations in external bodies, but solely in working upon the minds of men.

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But it has pleased God to make the right exercise of our Freewill one among the causes procuring the good that shall befal us, and to render the good he gives us effectual or not, according to the disposition and temper wherewith we receive it: therefore prayer, having a natural efficacy to mend the state and disposition of the heart, will enable us to reap the benefit of those good things he has procured for us and put into our power. So it is truly said, Ask and ye shall receive, though we cannot move God to do any single thing he would not have done without our prayer, because we may move ourselves thereby till we come within the stream of his blessings.

Hence it follows, and divines constantly recommend, that we should pray with resignation, for though we ought never to prefer a petition which we do not believe in our sincere judgment beneficial and proper for us to attain, yet we may be mistaken, in which case God will not give us the thing we desire, but a better in lieu: nor will he alter his measures upon our request, but give that which he has already made our devotion a natural means to obtain. So that if we ask with devotion we may be sure of receiving, not perhaps the very thing we have set our hearts upon, but some improvement in our spiritual

spiritual part, more valuable and more conducive to our present solace of mind and to our future interests.

Hence appears likewise that the benefit of prayer depends entirely upon the manner of performing it, for if we do not pray with faith we might full as well have let it alone: but by Faith we are not to understand a confident assurance of prevailing in the particular point we pray for, for this has no foundation to rest upon either in reason or Scripture. If any one desires to know the proper idea of Faith, it is beyond my skill to explain it better to him than I have already done in the Chapter upon that article, where he will find it the being possessed of a just sense of the divine Attributes, and of the government throughout the Universe being administered in perfect Wisdom and Goodness, so as to order all things for the best. While this sense can be kept up lively and vigorous in the imagination, we may be sure of reaping good benefit by our prayers; whenever it evaporates, they will become empty form of none avail. Therefore it was that in §. 2, I proposed to such as cannot keep their attention throughout a service, to select some particular parts, for one tenth performed with Spirit is worth a million of mere words and formal genuflections: but then the omission

sion of the rest must be really owing to inability and human infirmity, not to laziness; for nine parts in ten will not suffice, if it were feasible to have gone through the whole.

9. From what has been said it appears, that increase of grace and virtue are the proper and primary objects of prayer, because having a natural tendency to procure them, but not to procure any thing else: for prayer, as observed before, being a pouring out our sentiments and desires before God, the awe of his presence upon our imagination, will give them a purity and sincerity they had not during our commerce in the world, and by putting our minds frequently into that posture of desire and sentiment, we shall bring them by degrees to fall habitually thereinto of their own accord; just as a man may bring his feet to turn outwards spontaneously by often holding them in that position.

Nevertheless, prayer may very usefully be preferred for externals; for though it has no influence to procure them, it may sometimes procure what will procure them. By praying for health, for success in our callings, and for deliverance from evils, we shall impress upon our minds a sense of those blessings coming from God, who will be propitious according

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as we conduct ourselves before him: and this will engage us to an industry, a sobriety, a vigilance and prudence, that may not improbably bring us into possession, of the things we desire: so that health, success, and deliverance will be the real effects of our prayer. If we pray for the peace, the good order, and the prosperity of our country, we shall become more sedulous and hearty in doing our parts towards promoting them, and help to inspire the like sentiments among our neighbours: whereby, it is not impossible that our country may really be the better for our praying.

In like manner, whatever we pray for with a reflection obvious to the very heathens, that God will grant nothing to the prayers of the idle and the negligent, we shall obtain so much as our own right disposition of mind can contribute towards attaining it; and this is much more conducive to the procurement of good things without us, than people are commonly aware of: for if the wants, vexations, and troubles we bring upon ourselves by our own misconduct were subtracted, I believe few of us would find cause to complain at what remained. Yet our prayers are not certainly lost, although the diligence and management they nourish in us should prove of none avail towards supplying our

wants,

wants, because they may furnish us with what will answer our purpose as well without.

Suppose a man having none other subsistence than ten acres of land which are worth him five pounds a year, and of so infirm a body that he cannot possibly earn a farthing more by his skill or labour; if upon finding himself in want of necessaries he should pray to have his land increased, but instead of that it should please God miraculously so to fertilize his land, that it should yeild him a hundred pounds a year, every body would allow this to be a full answer to his petition: for however he might express himself, it was not the quantity of land, but the income arising from it that he desired. In like manner when we ask for externals, it is not the bare having them in custody, but the ease and pleasure to be received from them, that is properly the object of our desire; and we ask the things for sake of the enjoyment we expect they will give us in the possession: therefore, if God refuse us them, but so fructify the soil of our hearts, as that it shall yield the same income of enjoyment we could have expected from the addition of them, it is a compleat answer to our petition. For it has been shown, in a Chapter of a former volume upon the Ultimate Good that it lies solely in satisfation or complacence of mind;

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all other things are good or valuable only in proportion as they tend nearly or remotely to yield us an income of that.

Now prayer devoutly performed with due resignation to the Will and Wisdom of God, and a persuasion that he orders all things for the best, will make us better pleased with the blessings he vouchsafes us, better contented under his dispensations, and more hopeful to draw some good profit from them: whereby we may receive greater satisfaction and complacence of mind, and pass our days more happily, than we might have done had the petition been granted in the form it was offered. Therefore I can so far allow confidence of obtaining a favourable answer to our request, as an ingredient in the faith rendering it effectual: for the devout worshipper may be assuredly confident of receiving the thing he asks in value, though perhaps not in specie.

Not that I would give into the stoical extravagance of expecting to do every thing by the temper and disposition of the mind, so as that this should always keep us easy and happy under the severest pressure of wants, distresses, and pains: for God has not made such firmness practicable in this imperfect state of mortality. He has given us wants and natural appetites with various means of gratification,

gratification, wherein he has placed a considerable part of our enjoyment in this life, and has made our desires the avenues leading into prudence, industry, sociableness, and many other virtues; there is nothing then, blameable in pursuing our conveniences and accommodations by all lawful and innocent methods; but the principal fund of our happiness must spring from the state and tenor of our minds; this then we ought to improve with all possible diligence, for it will make us relish our pleasures while we have them, and prove a sure refuge in disappointment when all other things fail. Nor need we scruple to make externals the subject of our petitions, for if offered in sincerity and pureness of heart, we have ground to hope assuredly that God will either give us the good things seeming requisite to our well being, or if he judges otherwise, will enable us to enjoy our minds with peace and tranquillity without them, or at least make our pressure the passage to some greater advantage.

10. Upon the same grounds is founded the duty of praying for others, for their deliverance from wants and distresses, for their patience under them, their drawing some good profit from them, for their health, their improvement, their success in lawful undertakings, for the peace and prosperity of our country,

country, for the advancement of sound Religion and practical Philosophy, those hasteners of the coming of that grand blessing to the human species, the kingdom of the just, which is the kingdom of God, wherein his Will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. For though we cannot move God, nor retard, or hasten, or make the least alteration in his measures, nor influence the hearts of other persons by our devotions, yet we may move and work alterations in ourselves thereby. And the tenor of our minds may be of greater service to other people than most of us are careful enough to observe, for from the desires of the heart the actions proceed; according as that stands more humanely, benevolently and piously disposed, we shall apply with better inclination to assist all we can, as well in their distresses, as their successes: and when it is remembered how great a force there is in sympathy, we shall see that they may catch a spark of industry, of prudence and patience from us to their own emolument; at least they will receive a considerable comfort and pleasure on finding us take a sincere part in either fortune befalling them.

Neither are our good wishes unavailing to the community, as they prompt us to contribute our share towards promoting the prosperity we wish for. We are all members of the

the community, whose good is advanced by the united efforts of its constituents; nor is the most inconsiderable among us of no consequence, if it be no more than to abstain from doing mischief by his private passions and indiscretion. If the politic, the aspiring, the hot-headed, the discontented, and the wanton, had not too sovereign a contempt of prayer ever to join in it devoutly or otherwise than for form and fashion sake, I think there could not be such unwillingness to part with power nor greediness to get into it, such struggles and party-animosities, such virulence and obloquy in declamatory prose, or scandalous versification as we are now-a-days pestered with: however, I cannot but congratulate my country, for that I believe those evils have never run shorter lengths in any age or nation, than our own.

Then for that grand interest of the species, the progress of perfection in human nature and bringing forward the kingdom of the just, the seat of this I aprehend lies not in external nature but in the hearts of men; and it has been shown in the Chapter on Divine Economy, how Providence carries on this great work by a multitude of operators concurring in their several stations thereto: but we cannot better qualify ourselves for performing our part than by an increase of our

Charity,

Charity, which our prayers are particularly efficacious to strengthen in us, so that we may be sure thereby of advancing one person somewhat nearer towards perfection, and have a chance of advancing many more by our example and sympathy. For while praying for the good of others or the advancement of true Religion, we cannot in reverence to the Divine Majesty then fully striking upon our imagination, but heartily wish and desire what we pray for, which will gradually bring the like heartiness to be habitual and practical: and it has been observed in former places, that if a hearty and judicious Charity were once become universal among mankind, that alone would suffice to restore a Paradise upon Earth.

Hence may be seen the foundation there is in reason and nature of that injunction to pray for our enemies, and those that despitefully use us and persecute us, because by so doing we shall preserve our universal Charity unimpaired, our opposition will not be enmity, nor rancour, nor resentment, but unwelcome necessity, nor proceed farther than prudence and self-defence require: we shall continue ready to do them all the good offices consistent with our own just rights, and the rights of others to whom they may be dangerous: we shall not resent private injuries whenever

whenever greater inconveniencies and disorders would ensue therefrom to the public: and should be able, if our considerate judgment should so pronounce expedient, to turn the right cheek to him that has smitten the left, and give up our coat also to one that has taken away our cloke.

11. I am apt vehemently to suspect that the prayers of our Church frequently concluding through or for the sake of Jesus Christ, gives an idea to many persons that God has no immediate regard for us at all, but bestows his blessings purely to gratify his Son, upon those to whom he has happily taken a liking: and that by the use of that name we may move him to do a thing he was indifferent to before. I need not take pains to show how repugnant this notion is to reason and rational Faith: neither do I believe it was in the thoughts of the compilers of our Liturgy, nor designed to be inculcated in the Scriptures. I own indeed there are several expressions which seem to look strongly that way, and perhaps it might be necessary that such opinion should be connived at for the Jews, who looked for a temporal deliverer to rescue them by his might and prowess, or for the gross-minded Gentiles, who could take their apprehensions of the Almighty only from the likeness of earthly princes, in order

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to lead them by the avenue of their own conceptions into an expectation of benefit from the Gospel.

But for such has have ears to hear, they are told expressly, that God so loved the world he gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins: so the Redemption was a joint act of love in the Father as well as in the Son. And he is all along represented as the God of love, sending his sunshine and his rain upon the just and the unjust, long-suffering and merciful, ready to forgive, unwilling the sinner should perish, but that he should turn from his evil ways and live. This being his character there is no doubt, he is always ready to give his creatures all the good things proper for them, and consistent with the order of government respecting his spiritual Natures established in perfect Wisdom, of his own mere motion, without needing an intercession prompting him thereto. Besides that, however we may understand the distinction of persons in the Godhead, they can never be imagined so different in temper and character, as that one should take a liking to objects indifferent to the other, or one should importune for things not already judged proper by the perfect Wisdom of the other.

But the Gospel teaches that Christ is the way and the life, for no man can come to the

Father unless through the Son: he came from God to direct us by his doctrines and assist us by his institutions, and goes before to lead us by his example in the road which is the natural avenue to the divine blessings: therefore he is styled the Intercessor, Mediator, and Agent going between God and Man, as I have endeavoured already to explain in §. 26. of the Chapter on the Christian Scheme. But then we must travel the road ourselves or shall receive no benefit from the Intercession, which operates no otherwise than by bringing us into the way: for even his death and passion will avail only such, who strive to imitate his endurance in a good cause, to crucify the lusts of their flesh, the pride and indolence, and unruly passions of their heart, and to subdue the carnal or sensual part under subjection to the spiritual or rational.

Therefore I apprehend we are not warranted to expect that Christ will do any thing for us at a distance in Heaven, nor otherwise than by the instrumentality of our own powers towards bringing our hearts into that frame which may qualify them for reception of those blessings, that God in his Wisdom and Goodness has prepared for his creatures. And by the phrase Through Jesus Christ, is to be understood that we hope to

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obtain the things we sue for by the way he has opened to us for arriving at them: and for his sake, implies that God will give them to us in consideration of our employing the means he has put into our hands for attaining them. So that those expressions are of similar import with that ending one of the sentences in the Lord's Prayer, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us: or something in the nature of an oath, as if we should say, So help me God in my present wants as I shall strive faithfully to persevere in the tenor of sentiment and conduct prescribed me, and avail myself of the aids afforded me in the Gospel.

I do not mean to condemn the literal sense of Intercession in persons who cannot understand any other, for there are many among our vulgar of as gross conceptions as the ancient Jew or the Gentile; and as there is meat for men and milk for babes, we must allow every one to take what is most suitable to his digestion: therefore I would not wish any body to disturb himself that he cannot fully enter into the explanation offered above, for whoever applies to his devotions with the purest ideas he is capable of entertaining, performs them well, and will receive all the benefits from them promised in the Scriptures. But I think the literal sense ought

not to be countenanced, much less encouraged, in whomsoever is susceptible of the other: because experience testifies into what mischiefs it has unwarily led mankind. For if God had no bowels of compassion for us since the disobedience of Adam, yet might be moved to give us eternal happiness by the Intercession of his Son: the Son too, after we had forfeited his favour by actual transgressions, might re-instate us upon the recommendation of St. Peter, or St. Mary, or St. Bennet Sheerhog, or St. Vedast, alias Foster, or some other prime favourite: but if we happen to be strangers to the foresaid Saints, still it is likely they in imitation of their Master's example, will take us under protection, if we can get some priest or holy man upon earth to present our petition. Thus have men been led to imagine that in the Court of Heaven, as in some Italian Court, points are carried by interest and favour: and thus Religion has been turned into an infamous trade.

12. But though we have now in these countries gotten rid of those corrupt excrescencies, yet there are others which sometimes creep out from the vulgar idea of Christ doing any thing for us while we lie still, or otherwise than by enabling us to do what we could not have done of ourselves: for dependence on him and the practice of good works

works being promiscuously inculcated as the necessary steps to salvation, many are apt to place them out of their proper order, reckoning that the first which ought to be esteemed the last. They apprehend good works no otherwise beneficial than by giving them a claim to the protection of Christ, by whose sole operation the mercy of God is turned upon them. He has commanded righteousness and declared he will love those who seek it, so they must be righteous only to please him and gain the effects of his love: whence they value themselves upon their othodoxy, and place salvation in externals, thinking themselves good Christians in proportion to the staunchness of their belief, or assiduities and fervours in their devotion. Whereas whoever consults the Scriptures will find by the whole tenor of them, that Christ came to deliver us from sin, but from punishment only in consequence of the other, by delivering us from that which would incur it.

I am far from laying a stress upon the merit of good works: they are generally though not always efficacious to our better accommodation and enjoyment in this transitory life, but have none effect upon our future interests, otherwise than by strengthening the virtues wherein the health and vigour of our spiritual body consists. Now virtue lies solely

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in the mind, it is an habitual disposition in the heart or imagination to follow readily the dictates of judgment or understanding, and is the same while lying dormant unexercised as when exemplified in outward acts: but our actions constantly flow from the dispositions of the heart, therefore good works are the surest evidence of our possessing the virtues, and if we fail in the performance of them according to our skill, ability, and opportunities, however fondly we have flattered ourselves, we may be sure of falling deficient in the particular virtues prompting thereto. But religious virtues are not such, while remaining in speculative theorems, nor until taking strong hold on the imagination and become habitual and practical persuasions, comprehended under the name of a saving Faith: which, as I have endeavoured to show in the Chapter upon that article, consists in a quick sensibility of distant good and evil, equally with the present, and in possesing just and lively sentiments of the Power, the Wisdom, the Goodness, the Holiness, the Equity of God, and his government of the Universe together with all things great and small contained therein: from whence will naturally grow a soothing unshaken Hope, a thorough satisfaction in the lot of our existence, and an unreserved Charity to our fellow-

low-creatures as connected with ourselves in one general interest.

This I apprehend figured in Scripture style by coming to the Father, living to God, being his child, or becoming one with him. Had we our rational faculties in full perfection and our sensitive under entire command, as they are believed to have been in Adam before his fall, we might perhaps attain this saving Faith without foreign aid, and then should need no Intercession to bring down that happiness which would follow therefrom in the course of nature established by our Almighty Governor. But every man's experience, who consults it fairly, will testify, that this is not the case, and it is the doctrine of our Church that we cannot rectify the disorder in our internal machinery by our own management, nor without aid of the rules prescribed, and the remedies dispensed in the Gospel: for no man can come to the Father unless through the Son; we must become incorporated with our elder brother to become children of God, and must live to Christ before we can live to Him. Yet the bare conviction of our understanding that such rules and remedies are necessary, will not urge us to apply them without a firm persuasion of mind of their efficacy, nor can this be generated without a full dependence

pendence upon the skill and ability of the prescriber.

So that Faith in Christ is effectual only to make us follow his regimen, and the regimen beneficial only for the health whereto it will restore us: for if it were possible for a man to perform all the peculiar duties of Christianity without performing those which are not peculiar, I shall not scruple to question whether he would be ever the better for so doing. But Faith in Christ, is called a saving Faith, because being the sole and certain avenue to that which is properly so: therefore the conclusion of our prayers operates in the same manner as the other parts of them, not by moving God or Christ to make them more favourably disposed towards us, or prevail on them to do any thing further than they have already done on our behalf, but by bringing ourselves into a frame of mind capable of receiving benefit from the provisions they have made for our use, and impressing deeper upon our hearts a dependence upon the all-sufficiency of our Saviour, which will urge a greater attention and diligence in applying the means he has prescribed for attainment of a saving Faith.

13. Prayer is commonly parted into four kinds, Petition, Confession, Intercession, and Thanksgiving: I have already said enough of the

the three former, and need only now add a word upon the last. This deserves the name of a Divine Service more properly than any of the others, for we seem directly to serve God herein, and not ourselves: we approach the throne of Glory, not with our troubles and wants, nor those of one another, nor yet with the mortifying prospect of our frailties and corruptions, we come in joy and alacrity of heart to offer our tribute of grateful praise, that only return in our power to make for all his manifold blessings.

And to render the tribute compleat, it behoves us to recollect as many of the blessings poured out upon us as we can, our being, our health, our faculties of body and mind, our accommodations, our conveniences and pleasures of life, the gifts of nature and fortune, those we share in common with our fellow-creatures, with the species, with the community, with our friends, and those we possess in particular ourselves; exemptions from danger, escapes from mischief, deliverance from troubles, what progress we have made in any virtue or useful improvement, what opportunities we we have employed well, and what favourable accident have befallen us. But then our sacrifice must be of the choice firstlings of the flock, without spot or blemish of vanity or flattery, but the spontaneous

neous produce of the heart: for a force put upon the mind here will vitiate the performance more than in any other kind. The praise must be a voluntary oblation, not a grudging payment, for God loveth a cheerful giver, more especially in offerings made to himself: he searches into the heart, and is not to be imposed upon so far as to accept whatever does not come freely from thence.

There are some zealots who would have us always kiss the rod of affliction, and thank God for every exercise of it upon us. I do not deny that afflictions work to our benefit, and have taken pains in the course of this work to shew that they do so, therefore whenever we can discern the particular benefit accruing therefrom, we are in the right to be thankful for them; but this is very rarely the case, and there are many other things we may be convinced in our judgment are for our good, yet if they be not apparently so to our imagination, they are no proper topics of thanksgiving. I have shewn in the proper place, that our tastes and inclinations fluctuate, we do not always relish the same pleasures with equal glee, nor value the good things we possess always at the same rate: but we ought to take the matter of our thanksgivings from those objects which then most strongly touch our hearts; for to thank

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God for what we are not sincerely glad at possessing, is arrant flattery and compliment, it is telling him he is good, when we are not sensible of his goodness ourselves.

The tribute of praise and acknowledgment is undoubtedly a duty expected from us, but we cannot pay it well out of duty: the thought of obligation can serve no farther than to put us upon searching in our reflection for proper topics of thankfulness, but we must have some nobler principle to actuate us in the performance. And surely among the innumerable blessings we receive, it cannot be hard for any man to pick out such as at that instant he may feel a sensible joy and hearty gratitude in reflecting on. But though the consciousness of having done well in any part of our conduct is a very reasonable matter of thanksgiving, because ascribing the whole glory to God, and the sense of blessings, is strengthened by contemplating the want of them elsewhere, yet we must take great heed that the comparison be made upon things, not upon persons, for this would lead us insensibly to assume the glory to ourselves.

The fondness for excelling is a wily enchantress never sufficiently to be guarded against, it is apt to insinuate into all our actions and all our thoughts, and too frequently even into our religious exercises: but vanity

is the worst ingredient we can mingle among our offerings, it is worse than fear or obligation, for they only render them insipid, but this like dead flies in a pot of Ointment, turns the sweet smelling savour into a noisome stench. The Pharasee, who fasted thrice a week, paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and gave alms of all he possessed, if he believed those things duties, was very proper in giving thanks for having performed them, had his joy arisen from the benefit they were of to himself: but it seems his joys sprung from the pride of telling God, how much superior he was to the wicked Publican: therefore he went down to his House less justified than the other, who had only smitten his breast, and said, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14. There is a seeming contradiction among the directions given in the Scriptures upon this subject: for we are warned against the Battology or vain repetitions of the heathens, yet on the other hand commanded to pray without ceasing, to continue instant in prayer, and expect to prevail by our importunity, God being likened to a man who would not rise out of his warm bed until teased into a compliance by incessant knockings. Wherein we cannot suppose any variety either in the matter or manner of the application,

plication, for the person knocking wanted only one thing, a loaf of bread, nor does it appear that he played any change of tunes in drumming against the door. But whenever there are seeming contradictions, we may consider the two branches of them as intended to guard us against two opposite extremes; for so the exhortations to industry, and to take no thought for the morrow, are levelled against the contrary vices of idleness, and anxious solicitude: and if we recollet what has been argued above concerning the effect of prayer being worked solely upon ourselves, not upon the Almighty, it may help to discover what those extremes are.

For while we conceit ourselves able to move the Heavenly Powers, we shall be apt to imagine the effect owing to the vehemence and repetition of the impulse, not to the temper and disposition of mind wherein we gave it: just as a man who goes to push a stone along, it is no matter whether he does it in anger, or fear, or wantonness, or out of obligation, the stone will move according to the strength and number of his thrusts, not according to the state of his mind. And so the Papists seem to apprehend the matter, for they believe that twenty Ave Marys run off without any devotion, like twenty shillings dropped carelessly into a man's hand, are worth just as much

much again as ten. Or if we look upon the manner of performing them as material, still while retaining the opinion of their changing the disposition of God towards us, we shall value ourselves thereupon, and claim the title of obedient servants, and very righteous people for our assiduities and devotion. Or if we get rid of that notion, but have none of their operating upon ourselves, we may regard them as superstitious and foolish, to be complied with only now and then for fashion sake, and to avoid giving offence.

Whereas if we look for the benefit of our prayers in the effect they work upon ourselves, and reflect on their manner of operation, we shall see sufficient reason for being assiduous and importunate in them; because else they cannot produce an habitual and permanent change in the mind. I have observed in a former place, that there are two ways to happiness, one by procuring the objects we desire, the other by bringing desire to fix upon the objects in our power, or that are proper for us, or upon courses of conduct conducive to our benefit: the former depends upon fortune and external circumstances, the latter lies more under our own management; and herein consists the art we are to learn from Religion and Morality. I have likewise shown that desires have their seat in the imagination,

tion, for what we know very well in the judgment of our understanding to be good, does not touch us in the expectation, nor give us a pleasurable sense in the possession, until we have gotten an appetite towards it, which appetite, if it be not among those given by nature, can be acquired only by habit.

Now prayer has a natural efficacy to raise a desire for the things we pray for, and a relish to the objects then holden under contemplation, but it must be by continual bending that desire and sentiment can be brought to remain in their proper ply, which will give us a permanent habitual, happy temper of mind, rendering us willingly obedient to the Will of God, easy and satisfied within ourselves, prudent in our conduct, and heartily disposed towards one another. Therefore we need not regard style nor variety of expression, any farther than we find requisite upon our own account to keep our reverence and attention alive: for what ever, and how lately soever repeated, we can offer with unabated vigour and earnestness, will answer the purpose as well as if it were new dressed, and furbished up.

Hence appears there is no irreverence in a common form of liturgy: for we must not expect to please God by the novelty and copiousness of our diction, but by the sincerity and heartiness of our application. Then as

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most prayers begin with an exordium alike suitable to introduce deprecation, confession, intercession, petition, or thanksgiving, and the gifted in extempore prayers are extremely slow in their pronunciation, I should think the hearer must lose several minutes in expectance before he can know the proper posture to cast his mind into, preparatory for what follows.

15. Nevertheless how little ground soever there may be, either in reason or Scripture, to believe seriously that we can move God, it may be serviceable to take up such an idea for the time while employed in our devotions, as it will help us considerably in the due performance of them. For as observed in former places, we find it many times convenient to conceive of things otherwise than we know them to be; we commonly apprehend the Sun moving from East to West, though in our considerate judgment we are convinced of the contrary; we give way to a temporary persuasion of the transactions being real as we see represented in a play, or described in a poem or novel, without which we could receive neither pleasure nor instruction therefrom; Tully directs the orator to possess his imagination strongly with the cause being his own, or he will not be able to plead it effectually; and he that enters upon a difficult undertaking,

undertaking, will be more likely to succeed for believing that he shall: in like manner by putting on a temporary persuasion of wresting a favour from God we may be encouraged to apply more strenuously, and shall work a stronger impression upon our minds.

And this temporary persuasion is so necessary as to make it expedient for the vulgar, or those who live almost wholly by imagination and very little by understanding, to indulge in them a permanent persuasion of the like nature, rather than they should be wanting in the temporary: for they will see no absurdities flowing therefrom, and so cannot be hurt by it, unless misled by designing or enthusiastic persons. But for such as have any command over their imagination, and are able to make the distinction, considering the dangers before mentioned appendant to the notion of prevailing upon God to alter his measures or his disposition towards us, it is better they should cast that notion aside as soon as they come out from their devotions; that they may not regard them as virtues, but rather as means prescribed by their Saviour for the attainment of virtue. Yet even in that light they may rejoice at having performed them well, as a man may rejoice at having gained something that he can turn

to his advantage: still estimating their condition, not by their religious exercises, but by the habits and sentiments of mind they possess, which are best evidenced and strengthened by works, but by divine services only in failure of sufficient opportunities for performing good works.

They may then escape the danger of being righteous overmuch, which can only happen by placing righteousness in that which it is not, for it is impossible to be really and truly righteous overmuch: and so it is to live too well, but by living well is commonly understood eating high and plentifully, and in that sense it is certain that many live too well, so as to hurt their health and fill their bodies with humours and distempers. But if it be said that our spiritual food be of too pure a nature ever to surfeit, this I shall not dispute, but then our food does not consist in acts of devotion, for if we will imitate our Savour, our meat and drink ought to be doing the Will of God: so that the externals of Religion are not our food but our spiritual physic, necessary in this fallen state to correct the vicious humours in our constitution, and bring our internal organs into a proper tone for digesting their natural food. But every body knows physic may be overdone, and it may be misapplied, as it certainly is when the timorous

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and low-spirited are driven into perpetual self-denials, fastings, and humiliations.

Therefore if we consider prayer as a remedy in the spiritual dispensary, though no part of it ought to be omitted in due proportion, yet we shall see cause to prescribe the four several species of it more copiously for particular patients: confession for the proud, the sanguine, and the pleasure-hunters: petition for the thoughtless, and the worldly-minded; intercession for the selfish, the ill-natured, and the passionate; and thanksgiving for the fearful, the melancholy, and the discontented. This last may be thought an improper application, for where shall the discontented find any matter for praise? I expect they will be at a loss at first, but after some practice, beginning with evils that might have befallen worse than those they complain of, and noting well in memory whatever touches them at any time, they will perceive the list increase suprizingly, and soon discover many things to rejoice at and be thankful for, which they could not have thought of before.

But though I would have every man be so far his own physician as to observe the success of his remedies, yet he ought not to rely solely upon experience, but consult the written and received rules, and take the recom-

mendation of persons who in his best judgment he sees reason to confide in: for it is not uncommon with medicines of the alterative kind, as are all those we have been speaking of, to take good effect though the patient himself does not perceive it. However let him beware of Quacks, lest they draw him in by their vehemence and positiveness to place a faith in their Nostrums and Panaceas, as efficacious to cure all distempers, past, present, and to come.

16. There is another religious performance, which if it cannot take rank as a species of prayer, yet bears a near affinity therewith, because operating in the same manner, viz. by impressing the ideas it contains more strongly upon the imagination; and this is, Singing. It answers more particularly to that species called Thanksgiving: therefore St. Paul directs, if any be sad, let him pray; if joyful, let him sing psalms. We have observed that importunity and repetition work more upon the imagination, than argument: now in Singing, the words are drawn out, and the same thoughts made to dwell upon the mind longer than in any other way. Therefore you find that in clubs and parties they have their songs, which are known to encourage them greatly in their several ways of thinking, especially among the populace.

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It was much used by the primitive Christians, by the first Reformers, and in the beginnings of most sects: but what vitiates it in the established Church is, the fondness for an exquisite taste in Music, which wholly draws off all attention from the thought to the sound, and renders it impracticable for the vulgar to join in the Chorus. Go to an Italian Opera, and you will hear the singers so clip and mangle their words, that, without a book in your hand, you will lose even the little sense they contain. Not but that good Music may be employed to give strength to the expressions, as witness the Coronation Anthem, the Messiah, and other of Handel's performances: but there are few of the composers who know how to do this, or even endeavour it. Besides that those pieces ought to be executed by good and skilful voices, who cannot be followed by a common congregation.

The songs inspiring party-zeal and the spirit of drinking, are generally very bad music, badly executed, being rather roars or squawls than songs: yet have they the full weight upon the company. I doubt not that many a jolly toper has bawled out, The Soph he is immortal, and never can decay, for how should he return to dust, who daily wets his clay? until he has sung himself into a full persuasion

persuasion of that witticism being a solid argument, which would justify him in his assiduities at the bottle. And though the Quaker never sings professedly, yet the whine and aukward cadence and see-saw action, wherewith the spirit vents itself in his sermons, may be called a bastard-singing: and perhaps that is all there is affecting in them. Thus it appears by manifold experience, that singing even of the most hideous kind is a powerful engine for working sentiments into the mind. I never was a singer myself, so can speak only upon observation of things around; and I think it manifest from thence, that singing, judiciously applied, might be turned to excellent service.

It is our business to study human nature, by what media it is affected, and in what manner they severally touch it. In matters relative to our own conduct, we must consult our own temperament and constitution, but when the public is concerned, regard ought to be had to human nature in general: nor may we pretend to faint away at the screamings of a country Church, because we happen to have a fine ear, and delicate taste for music. The custom in some places of breeding up a set of singers to perform according to the rules of art, has, I apprehend, proved a greater hindrance than furtherance to devotion;

tion; as the rest of the people let them sing by themselves, and attend solely to their quavers, without heeding the substance of what they sing. If they were permitted to sing as long as they pleased after service is over, it might be of good use to withhold such as chose to stay with them from other amusements less suitable to the day. The only help to the congregation seems to be that of an organ, whereon the operator may flourish about as he likes in the symphony, but when he comes to lead the tune, there should be nothing of levity or wantonness, nor affectation to show a nimbleness and dexterity of finger.

In composing manuals of devotion and collections of hymns, regard should be had to the nature of the mind, particularly her sensitive faculty, which is the seat of persuasion; in order to inculcate such sentiments there as may conduce to a happy and useful life. The former is applicable for rectifying our desires, and the latter for those joyful reflections that spring from Religion: but then provision should be made for improving all of them, not confining the thoughts to one, or a few. The Methodists, and others of similar turn, who deal most largely in hymns, lay them all out upon the Redemption: but though this be the principal topic of joyful praise, it

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is not the only one. They are so zealous for the Son, that they totally overlook the Father: whereas the Son himself has told them that he came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; that he is the way and the life, that is, the way to life, which cannot be attained by saying, Lord, Lord, nor unless by coming to the Father. Let them then consider by what sentiments of mind they may come nearest to the Father, what sources of comfort and hope and joy may severally arise from contemplation of the Attributes and government of Providence, and prepare forms for encouraging these in the breast: so that every pious Christian may find a ready help for speeding his approach in that particular track, which, in his present disposition of mind and of external circumstances, he feels himself most apt to pursue.

17. I do not know whether I shall not be counted an old-fashioned fellow in recommending those unpremeditated addresses to Heaven called ejaculations, especially of the laudatory kind: but I cannot help thinking they contribute greatly to preserve a habit of chearful piety, to keep the mind serene and easy within itself, to double the relish of our innocent pleasures, and wean us from such as are not quite so. But those exercises must

must be short, flowing spontaneously from the occasion, not studied nor made a task of: our business is to watch the little emotions in our heart, and encourage, never to force them, nor suffer them to leave a solemnity upon the thoughts or countenance, so as to supply fuel for spiritual vanity, or prove an interruption to other matters in hand.

Profane swearing has a like efficacy, only works the contrary way, and therefore may not improperly be styled ejaculating to the Devil, who is sometimes addressed therein by name: for it helps to confirm an habitual contempt of Religion and all the terms belonging to it, and for that reason I presume was first introduced by such as thought they had too strong a sense of Religion inculcated into them by the nurse and the priest, in order to get rid of it, and must be owned a sovereign remedy for that purpose. For a like reason probably, it was encouraged among the soldiery, because he who is to be afraid of nothing, should learn to fear neither God nor the Devil: and this maxim may be right while courage is understood to be an insensibility of danger, not a principle of prudence enabling to despise an imminent evil in contemplation of a greater distant good.

If this practice ever did any good, it must be by silencing cant and hypocrisy, and so, like

like one poison, serving as an antidote to expel another. Nevertheless, as the disciple is taught to imitate the unjust steward in his provident forecast for the future, and the saint may strive to copy the devil in his industry and perseverance; so the pious ejaculator may learn of the common swearer his spontaneity and ease of expression, and his readiness in mingling it among common transactions, without breaking off the train of thought he was engaged in by other business: but I would not have him imitate his vanity, nor aim to be thought a saint as the other does to be thought a wit, by the vehemence and fluency of his performances aided with gestures and turns of the eye respectively suitable to the occasion.

There is another form of devotion, which for the shortness may be reckoned approaching to the ejaculatory kind, called grace at meals: this our forefathers used to regard as a serious affair, but it is now growing obsolete. The master of a family, or parson, where there is one present, mumbles over a few words which nobody can hear, as if he was ashamed of his office; the ladies adjust their dress, the citizen eyes the smoaking viands, the beau pretends to rise from his chair just when it is over, the servants clatter the plates and glasses, every body looks upon it as an antiquated

antiquated ceremony still kept up they do not know why, only because they were used to it. When a company of young fellows get together, who in all ages and countries have ever been wiser than their fathers, they despise it as a ridiculous form. In polite assemblies, gentlemen of fortune and knowledge of the world, scorn submitting to vulgar customs whereof they see no use.

But why should it be deemed of no use, because so frequently none is made of it? and this may be presumed owing to their looking for the use in the wrong place, namely, in making the victuals more nutritive or assisting our powers of digestion, which savouring too strongly of the marvellous, I do not wonder they reject it. Whereas this exercise tends to cherish the habit of referring those things to the gift of Providence which we receive from natural causes: that main support both of Philosophy and Religion, without which the former would degenerate into Atheism, and the latter become all miracle, occult quality, and superstition. And since the continual converse among sensible objects, which we are obliged to keep up by our bodily wants and occasions, draws us unwarily into a forgetfulness of intellectual truths; it must be of no small service to break the attraction by casting a glance beyond the stream

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of second causes up to their original fountain, at the opening and close of every meal. Surely there are no pleasures of company so precious, but we might afford a little quarter minute from them for this service.

But religious thoughts are such stiff and heavy things that people are afraid, lest, if they suffer them to possess their minds for a quarter of a minute, they shall not get rid of them again in a quarter of an hour, nor be able to resume their gaiety. If any find inconveniences of this sort, it is rather owing to the stiffness of their faculties than unwieldiness of the objects: therefore they have the greater need to practise an exercise which will bring their mental organs more supple. We are all extremely fond of having our will; but the greatest and most valuable command is that over our thoughts, enabling us to think of what we will, and when we will, and as long as we will.

18. In the Chapter on Reason in a preceding volume, I have compared understanding and Imagination to a rider and his horse. The compleat horseman is master of all the paces of his beast, can turn him to right or left, put him suddenly into a round trot or gallop, and stop him again in an instant; he may let him sometimes prance and caper and curvet when he judges proper, but never against

against his liking: so it is the perfection of reason to have the inferior faculties under controul, to put imagination into any train, and resume the former again at pleasure; There are not wanting examples of such pliancy of imagination among mankind.

When Counsel at the bar are in the middle of an interesting argument, the Cryer calls out, Make way for the grand Jury: the orator suddenly breaks off, jokes and laughs among his acquaintance, and as soon as the bills are delivered, and the Foreman has made his bow, instantly resumes his thread of argument where he had left off. A man expert in business, being called out of a room full of giggling girls, may talk seriously of important affairs, give his orders compleatly, and then upon his return enter fully into the merriment going forward. We are told Cæsar could dictate to three amanuenses together, in doing which he must cast his attention to and fro successively between the trains belonging to three different subjects. So that it is possible to gain the art of grasping our ideas without letting them grasp upon the mind, or take such gluey hold as that we cannot wipe off at pleasure: and though we must not expect to run such lengths as Cæsar, it will be worth while to make what progress we can, especially with respect to the most serious

serious subjects. For since our condition of life necessitates us to be perpetually conversant amongst other matters of a very different kind, we shall have the more time for applying effectually to both, the less we lose in the passage from one to the other, and shall be able to intermingle them more frequently without damage or hindrance to one another: whereby all parts of our conduct, as well the trivial as the momentous, like the main timbers and embellishments of a building, may become one whole, constructed upon a uniform and consistent plan.

But we shall never compass this without learning to think easily on religious topics; for laborious tasks cannot be gone upon without painful preparation, nor will presently leave the reflection at liberty for any thing else: and one would imagine, there should need little exhortation to think easily upon Religion with our compatriots, who are so fond of doing every thing easily, and value themselves so much upon it. Only the ease they admire is not that arising from expertness, but from negligence and averseness to trouble: the ease of the idle boy, who slubbers over his lesson, not that of the proficient who has it current at his fingers' ends. They follow the present impulse of fancy or gale of fashion in every thing, and this they call moving

moving with ease; never considering there is a wide difference between doing things easily, and doing things that any body can easily do: whereas the true masterly ease is the child of application and practice, nor will ever be attained by him who resolves to do nothing he cannot easily do.

And this art of performing the most serious offices easily, and yet effectually, would be very serviceable for the godly to study, as it will clear them from affectation of godliness: which is the grand obstacle against its spreading, because rendering it distasteful to others. For affectation is always a stiff and forced thing, the very reverse to easiness: therefore whoever would gain this quality must attend solely for the time to the thing he is about, assuming no countenance nor gestures that do not flow naturally from it, having nothing of other people in his thoughts. For though he may wish to cast a good influence upon them, it would be improper to take pains upon that account: he had better leave example and sympathy to their chance of what effect they will work upon the bystanders. For virtue, like other beauties, is ever most amiable when appearing unconscious of her charms: and does greatest execution, when most undesigning.

19. Having examined the nature of divine services,

services, and found their efficacy lies in impressing salutary dispositions and sentiments in the heart or imagination, it is obvious that an operation upon that faculty may be aided by forms, ceremonies, external appearance, example, and sympathy: whence springs the expedience of public services, wherein a whole congregation, joining in the same form of worship, may do their work more effectually than they could have done singly by themselves. For if persons in the same way of thinking upon secular affairs fortify themselves in their sentiments, and become better united by assembling frequently together, why should not the like effect flow naturally from religious assemblies, were they resorted to in the same view, and not out of mere custom or obligation?

But if there were not certain stated times appointed for assembling, how should each man know when the rest were disposed to assemble? Nor perhaps would they ever stand so disposed, or turn their thoughts upon their spiritual concerns at all, without the idea of an obligation urging them to it at particular seasons: for it is well known how backward people are to find a time of their own accord for matters of business not of diversion, which they apprehend might be done at any time. Therefore the command to keep holy every seventh

seventh day had a rational foundation in human nature: not that there was an intrinsic sacredness in the day, which then could have been changed from the seventh, to the first, for the alteration was not made, by divine command issued from the mouth of our second lawgiver, nor recorded in the Gospel, but by unanimous consent of the first Christians probably to overthrow the superstitious notion of an intrinsic virtue in the day.

I make no doubt that worship performed with the same sincerity, heartiness, and devotion on a Thursday would be as effectual to all intents and purposes as on a Sunday: but it is not to be supposed that a man who neglects it at the appointed time, will perform it at any other. And a cessation from all common business, other than works of real necessity and charity, on that day, is likewise requisite as men are constituted: for else they would be perpetually finding excuses for non-attendance on their religious exercises, from avocations and impediments unexpectedly falling in their way. Besides that very few have such a compliant imagination as recommended in the last section, which will bear turning suddenly into the most opposite trains of thinking, without leaving a tincture of those engaged in before, or a hankering after those to follow next in succession: therefore it is

absolutely necessary to keep clear of all worldly attachments, that their minds may stand ready to fall into the posture proper for the business of the day. At least I would not advise any body to indulge himself in taking liberties with Sundays, until he can say a grace with full devotion, in the midst of gaieties immediately before and after, without suffering a single idea of them to intrude during the few moments of his address to Heaven.

Nevertheless, if any man imagines Sundays of no use to himself, for that he can think of Religion as much as becomes a gentleman without them, yet it is an unpardonable negligence to take no concern for other folks. People are apt to cry, What shall we be the better for going to Church, or nodding over a musty book in the evening instead of taking an innocent game at cards: but they should go on to ask one little question farther, what hurt may we do our neighbours, or the family? If I stay away from Church, I may probably apply to my Chapters, which often turn upon matters not wholly unsuitable for a Sunday's employment: if my neighbour the Cobler stays away, he goes to the alehouse, an employment less useful than that he follows on his working days; and he thinks he copies my example herein, because we both agree in that circumstance

circumstance of absenting from the public service.

For the generality can look no farther than to the outward behaviour, and think a conformity in that necessarily infers a thorough conformity of character: therefore it behoves us to remember St. Paul's maxim, All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient, and apply it to the present occasion; if what I am about to do be ever so harmless for me, yet while it may offend my brother, I will refrain. Hence appears that, to use the softest name, it is a high degree of inconsiderateness to do or omit any thing, whereby Sunday may fall into disregard: for how much soever we may persuade ourselves a form is needless for us, it is certainly needful for the greater part of mankind, who cannot enter into the reasons of things, but must be led into the substance by means of the form, and will catch at any authority or example of their betters to excuse them from the form, which is irksome to them because they do not discern its relation to the substance.

The cessation from business makes Sunday more improper for a day of jollity to the populace, than any other: for on other days they are restrained from wasting too much of their time by the necessary attendance to their work and professions, and kept in some

decorum by persons of sober deportment mingling among them: but on Sundays the serious are all drawn off to attend their devotions, riot and wantonness has no check nor controul, but the giddy and the libertine are left to themselves to improve one another in their extravagances. Assemblies of such persons, all in the same way of thinking or rather of thoughtlessness, may be termed anti-divine services: for as I said in the last section of profane swearing compared with ejaculation, they will naturally have an equal influence with the Church services, but working the contrary way, especially since those anti-ejaculations commonly bear a great part in the ceremony. Wherefore it must be expected they will bring upon the frequenters a callousness against all sense of Religion, decency, and order, and fit them for practices most opposite to the Will of God. Accordingly we find that such of our malefactors as make a penitent exit, and will give any true account of themselves, always declare, that the beginning of their ruin was owing to the custom of sabbath-breaking.

20. The same reason that directs to the appointment of times, avails likewise for the appropriation of particular places to divine worship: for as our lives pass in a continual succession of sensitive and reflective ideas, those

those of both sorts will run together in clusters, and whenever any one of the bundle happens to be excited, the rest will follow in train mechanically. This has been noted by persons of thought and observation in different branches of learning: Mr. Locke has a Chapter upon Association, which whoever takes the trouble to peruse, need not long remain unsatisfied: or if he has the curiosity to see the same subject handled in another manner, he may turn back to my two Chapters upon Combination and Trains in a former volume. Tully observes, the connection that prevails between places and things deposited in them by the fancy alone, from whence he says Simonides took the hint for striking out his art of memory: by which an orator, taking a large place, containing a multitude of compartments, all perfectly familiar to him, and stationing therein the several materials of his oration, represented by figures or images, in his imagination, they will occur to him again readily in their proper order as wanted. And there is scarce any-body but must have taken notice that on going into a school, a council chamber, a work-shop, or a ball room, where he has been frequently engaged, he will find his thoughts run spontaneously upon the subjects then used to occupy them in those places.

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In like manner the entrance into a Church, set apart for holy purposes, casts something of an awe and solemnity upon the mind, and would cast more, were people careful to carry none but holy purposes in with them. Therefore a sobriety and decency of deportment is necessary to give the Church its sacred influence: for it does not operate by charm, nor magic, nor occult quality of the building, but by the natural cohesion of sensitive ideas with those of reflection, wherewith they have been constantly united and kept clear of foreign mixtures.

And to our shame it must be owned, that the common people are better behaved in this respect than their superiors, for though they gather in knots in the church-yard to talk of their private affairs, of news, of fairs, of cricket-matches, yet when entered the doors, they throw aside all those amusements, and during their continuance within, preserve at least an appearance of seriousness: whereas the polite vulgar nod, and laugh, and giggle, and fidget to and fro, and whisper, or play antic tricks, and loll about with an affectation of carelessness, resolved to do wrong rather than not assert their liberty of doing what they will: I suppose the difference is owing to the meaner sort standing in awe of the parson, as believing him a great man;

but

but the gentry esteeming themselves above him, stand in none. If this be the case, it shows the greater need of something external to strike a mechanical awe upon persons who have not judgment and discretion enough of their own to keep them in decency and order.

The Church is the most improper place in the world for asserting privileges, and keeping up distinctions: when we come there, we are not 'squires and ladies, shopkeepers, ploughman, and dairy-maids; we are Christians and nothing else, all equally entitled to the privileges and benefits of that place, according as we comport ourselves in it. Therefore if I were Pope, I would decree that the poor man should put on his best cloaths and the rich man his worst, that there might be the nearer expression of equality. For the same reason I would prohibit all pompous titles and courtly epithets: these things are very proper in the world to encrease our reverence for those whom God has set in authority over us, but let every thing be done in its proper place; let us render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. When entered upon sacred ground, we are to pay our court solely to Heaven, not to our fellow servants though placed in office above us:

there

there should be no majesties or highnesses, nor most noble patrons, reverends nor right reverends, nor by what style or title soever dignified or distinguished; but the same decent plainness of style preserved throughout as in the morning prayer for the clergy and people, and that in the Communion Service, intitled for the Church Militant.

It is written, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them: but then the gathering must be in his name, that is under a sense of his immediate presence, or it will have no avail, for that it is which brings him down among us. For God is really and substantially present every where, alike intelligent and observant in the common parlour as at the altar, the only difference is made by the state of our internal optics: whenever they are set towards him, he stands before us; when they discern nothing of him, he is absent; and is more or less immediately present, according to the disposition whereinto they are fallen, which disposition the solemnity of the place helps to cast them into.

Wherever devotions can be paid with equal piety of heart, they will be accepted alike: but this cannot be done in all places indiscriminately without some extraordinary circumstance to fix the attention. Suppose a

man

man seized with a distemper that will suffer nothing to pass through him; he has tried several remedies in vain, and given himself over: if at last he finds them begin to take effect, I conceive he may offer as pure and acceptable a thanksgiving from his close-stool, as he ever did from a hassock in his pew: but ordinarily, when there is no uncommon incident to raise a strong emotion upon the mind, it is of great moment what objects are surrounding us. Let any man try whether he can throw his thoughts into whatever posture he pleases, while kneeling down upon a dunghill in the midst of cows, and hogs, and poultry: therefore he need not despise the aid of external appearances, but let him remember they are only aids; for neither they, nor the holy Spirit will do any thing for us, they only assist our endeavours in what we strive to do for ourselves.

From what has been said above it appears, there may be a real use in the consecration of Churches: not that it conjures down a supernatural influence into the stones or the mortar, the pulpit or the pews, but because it begins the association between the place and devout ideas to be connected therewith, and serves for a warning to the people to admit no discordant ideas to mingle in the train. Therefore there is an expedience in keeping

places

places once appropriated to sacred uses, from being employed in any others, which would dissolve the association that gives them their salutary influence. After the care I have taken all along to examine every thing by nature and natural causes, I shall hope to stand acquitted of all fondness for charm and for the marvellous: yet for all that, should make a scruple to play at cards, join in a country dance, bargain for a horse, or apply to any other profane employment in a Church. Not that I should think my profanation could draw any virtue away from the material or structure of the edifice, or render it less fit for the uses of other persons who should never know what I have been doing: but because I should apprehend it might by natural effect prove an unconsecrating the place with respect to myself, and such as might know of my levities, by making it introduce them mechanically to the reflection at other times, and thereby disassociating those trains it was intended to assist in striking upon the mind.

21. Nor do places alone deserve regard for their natural effect to keep imagination to her proper cue: but likewise things employed in them, vestments, utensils, and stations for performing the several offices. There is a greater exactness requisite upon those articles

articles for a gross and ignorant people, wherefore we find very minute directions given thereupon in the Jewish ceremonial, for which we must presume there was a good reason: for if we will needs deny them to have been of divine appointment but the impositions of Moses, still upon this hypothesis, we must allow him to have been a shrewd and crafty politician, who knew well what he did, and that they would work a strong effect upon the minds of the people, or else he would never have thought it worth while to employ them. But as mankind grows more rational, there is less occasion for application by the senses: perhaps little more is needful for us than such a neatness and decency in external appearances, as may not catch away the attention either by their finery or their slovenliness.

But that objects surrounding have no influence upon the minds of the company, is contrary to experience in the common customs of life: why else have we our drawing-rooms, where things are kept a little more spruce and elegant than in the common rooms for family use? A parcel of young folks might once for a frolic be very merry together in a barn hung all round with enormous cob-webs; and even in that case the novelty of the thing, and oddity of the furniture might

have an effect to encrease their merriment: but whoever should make a practice of receiving his company in this equipage, I fear would find the ease of conversation greatly clogged thereby; unless it happened to turn upon rallying him for the peculiarity of his taste. Therefore such as aim solely at the pleasures of conversation, and think nothing of drawing an admiration of their wealth or elegance of taste, will be careful to exhibit a scene that may neither offend, nor engage the eye.

Not that I mean to condemn all regard to elegance in private houses, but in a Church none other aim is allowable besides that of the benefit of conversation with Heaven: therefore the pomp of Popery is as faulty as a total negligence; it might indeed be very right to answer the purposes intended by it, which were to draw off the veneration for Religion, and turn it into a veneration for the persons officiating. Yet it seems expedient there should be some distinction of dress, and some little reserve of behaviour in those who make professions of dispensing holy things, that the appearance of the person may co-assist with the appearance of the structure. Neither is there a visible impropriety that he should officiate in one garb when acting as the mouth of the congrega-

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tion to lead them in their adorations to the throne of Glory, and in another when he takes the part of a teacher, employing human reason to expound the sacred oracles, and apply them to our particular uses: for something more solemnity of mind is proper for the people to exercise their Religion, than to learn it.

Nor is the variety in our service without its use for relieving and awakening the attention, for we shall find now and then that some parts of it are long enough to afford time for a comfortable nap. In short forms and ceremonies are so necessary, that Christians of all denominations, even those who affect to declare loudest against them, find it impracticable to do without them: they all have their particular places of worship, which they are careful to keep in what they esteem decency: and their badges of distinction, be it a black cap, a cloak, or coat of a peculiar cut, for their ministry. Even the gifted priestess among the Quakers is known by her green apron; and the brotherhood, though pretending to regard nothing but the inner man, yet are so conscientiously attached to externals, that I suppose they would sooner burn at the stake, than abate an inch of their broad-brimmed hat. In the last century, while a real sanctity was endeavoured

deavoured to be placed in externals, it was a noble struggle for religious liberty to prevent this notion from spreading among the people by opposing other externals against them: but now nobody retains such notion of their containing an intrinsic virtue, the charge of superstition lies at the door of those who imagine them to carry an intrinsic malignity. For reason pronounces them alike indifferent either way: therefore there is as much superstition to the full in believing the service cannot be read devoutly in a surplice, as that it cannot be so read without one.

22. Having thus essayed an explanation of the manner wherein externals help us forward in the work of Salvation, by assisting to bring the mind into a disposition proper for our most important duties, and so becoming the natural means of grace, the result will be, that a due regard for them deserves to be carefully inculcated, especially upon the young, the giddy, and the ignorant, who will be least capable of understanding their method of operation and wherein their real efficacy lies. Therefore they must be made to prevail in such way as can be effected, the more rational undoubtedly the better: but theory must sometimes give way to practicability, and he that cannot do as he would, must do as he can, rather than do nothing,

to

to attain a good end. Where the natural effects cannot be rendered manifest, God may be represented as giving us arbitrary commands: yet whatever is enjoined by him, or by persons delegated under him to give directions in matters of indifference, may be taken upon credit to carry a real expedience we cannot discern.

If this be too refined and abstruse to sink into some imaginations, recourse must be had directly to command, obligation, and fear: the duties must be enjoined as indispensable, issuing from divine authority, or human derived therefrom, whose commands are not to be disputed nor disobeyed, without drawing down heavy mischiefs upon the transgressor. But then particular care should be taken, both in the choice of things to be enjoined and manner of expression concerning them, to give no handle for apprehending an occult quality inherent in them, or supernatural efficacy annexed to them: it seems the best way to pronounce them in general sacred and necessary, without descending into particular explanations. If any person not content with the general idea of obligation will join thereto a kind of magical virtue, because incapable of conceiving an efficacy any other way, it is not to be avoided, nor will it do him any hurt: for superstition

we have said before is relative, and the grossest apprehensions are sufficiently pure to him, whom God has not endued with an understanding capable of better.

Religion will accommodate itself to all capacities, and if not designedly corrupted by politic or enthusiastic mixtures, will turn into nourishment salutary to all constitutions: just as the same bread turns into one kind of flesh in men, another in fowls, and another in fishes, proving nourishment alike to them all. Therefore to judge soundly of Religion it is necessary to study human nature, and what effects may be worked thereupon by the several parts of it: but the Freethinker pronounces hastily without cognizance of the cause, for he studies nothing of human nature, but proceeds altogether upon an abstract nature of things; a mere cant phrase, of which he has no clearer conception than the lowest vulgar have of their mysteries, and would be as much at a loss to give a steady intelligible explanation.

Then for the other part of his subject, Religion, he takes his idea of that from the nurse and the priest, whom he affects to hold in such sovereign contempt: for he apprehends it to contain nothing more than the first rudiments imbibed from them. But he might reflect that perhaps his nurse, or some

some other old woman first taught him to read, yet he would not now take his estimation of our language from the spelling and pronunciation of the old woman: and the priest who taught him his accidence, might not be the most enlightened of his order; or if he were ever so knowing, could convey no more than a child was capable of receiving. Who as soon as he began to think himself a man, which was probably before he left school, resolved to regard no more what was said to him by priests upon the subject, so could learn nothing more from them.

But it should be remembered that as in some sciences there is an exoteric and esoteric doctrine, both many times couched under the same language and the same figures the latter not capable of being conveyed compleatly by all the teaching in the world without honest and careful application in the recipient to digest it well for himself: so in the science before us, we are told there is a killing letter and a quickening spirit, which may be relative; for a popular system designed for every body's use, cannot be expected in all its parts, equally to suit every body's digestion; so that the literal sense, which is poisonous to one man, may prove wholesome to another, and the spiritual, which is vivifying to one, may seem as dry and tasteless

less chaff to the other. Therefore it becomes every one who thinks himself a profound reasoner, to search fairly for what rational construction things are susceptible of, and to whose rational uses they are applicable, before he pretends to decide upon the merits of them: if any thing herein before suggested in this and the preceding Chapters shall afford hints to help forward such an enquiry, I shall esteem it the luckiest thing I could have wished.

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